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NOT SINGLE SPIES

1. The Sultan goes to prayer

MOROCCO TODAY

by

BERNARD NEWMAN

ROBERT HALE LIMITED
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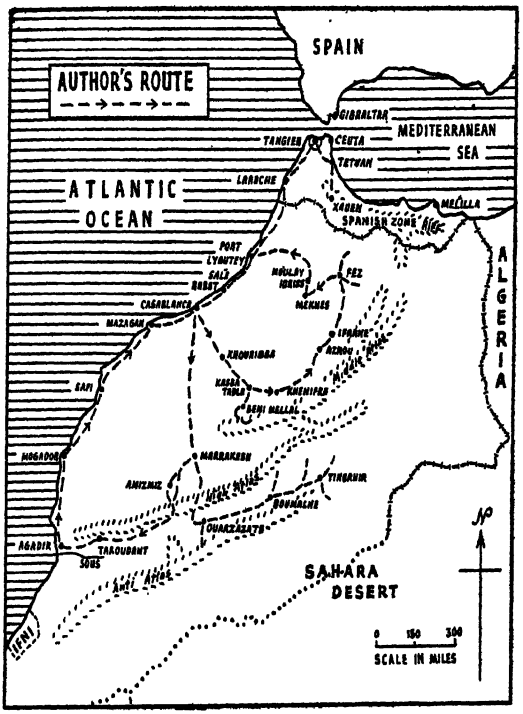
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TAROUDANT
SOUS
ANTI ATLAS
SAHARA DESERT
IFNI
ALGERIA
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SCALE IN MILES

CHAPTER ONE

THE SULTAN GOES TO PRAYER

I

THE first arrival on the open space outside the Sultan's palace was a dark-skinned man in a brown *djellabah*—a long robe with a hood. He proceeded to erect a stall, from which he proposed to sell Coca-Cola to the faithful who came to observe the weekly ceremony—for every Friday the Sultan formally visits the mosque for prayer.

The man seemed more anxious to discuss Coca-Cola than Moroccan nationalism or local politics. This popular beverage has certainly embarked on missionary enterprises, and with moving pictures must be classed as a feature of the American way of life which has been successfully exported. Indeed, the American pattern has been derisively labelled 'a Coca-Cola civilization'—usually by those most jealous of its material progress.

I gathered from the local vendor that in Morocco the course of true commerce seldom runs smoothly. When this beverage was first introduced there, its appeal was limited; Moslems are essentially conservative, and tend to view new ideas with suspicion. Then some imaginative local salesman revealed his genius. The men of Morocco are not merely strongly sexed, but have an overwhelming ambition to develop their virility and to retain it to the end of their days. Hence a subtle rumour spread through the *souks*, or markets, and was carried by visiting peasants into the villages—that Coca-Cola was a beverage fit for strong men. Young and old rushed to buy, for it was more pleasant to the taste and cheaper than the concoctions supplied by the medicine men.

"So you are doing well?" I suggested.

"I *was* doing well," he replied, and the bitterness in his tone suggested a sequel to the intriguing story of commercial enterprise.

He explained that trade had suffered a mortal blow. A small Moorish magazine was annoyed because it had been overlooked by the Coca-Cola advertising manager. It therefore announced that it had despatched a sample to an Egyptian 'analytical chemist', who had reported that the liquid contained hog's blood!

The report was obviously absurd, but among immature people there are those who will apparently believe anything.

"But surely the Coca-Cola took steps to denounce the lie?"

"Oh, yes, but you know what a rumour is! Then some of the Nationalists got hold of it. They were anti-foreign, you know, so they are anti-Coca-Cola."

"You mean—there were processions—'Down with Coca-Cola'—no, of course, that is what they didn't want."

"No; they just kept the rumours going. Not all of them—one of their papers was very pro-Coca-Cola."

I gathered that Coca-Cola had always been generously advertised in this paper, which now vigorously denounced the unfair aspersions.

The prospects were certainly intriguing. Not only had Coca-Cola become a symbol—an innocent symbol—of strife between Moors and Europeans—including Americans, in this context—but it was the cause of a split in the Nationalist ranks. To add to the complications, a brother of the Sultan was one of the directors of the Moroccan Coca-Cola company. Since the Sultan is spiritual as well as temporal head of the state, it was unthinkable that his brother should be branded as a hog's blood enthusiast. Even that, apparently, was not all.

"The worst of it is this," said my friend. "You may know that there is another drink. The rumours never mentioned that, so it still sells."

"Then why don't you sell that one?"

"I can't. Another merchant has the concession. He will set up his stall on the other side of the processional route."

I gathered that he would also do a good business. Thus another idea suggested itself: suppose the onslaught on Coca-Cola were the work not of a disappointed editor or of a Nationalist opportunist, but that of some unscrupulous vendor of the other drink, determined to supplant his rivals?

"I don't know, but you could be right," said the dark-skinned

man. "After all, anything can happen in this country. However, another rumour is going around—that the rival drink is a Jewish concoction."

"But that isn't true?"

"No, but the rumour is gaining ground—the company has some Jewish directors, I think. And you know how it is."

I gathered that commerce in Morocco involved complications and niceties with which European business was as yet unacquainted.

II

Since the Sultan is the religious as well as the temporal leader of his people, his state progress to prayer every Friday is of double importance.

His palace, delicately fawn in shade, is very extensive, as is doubtless necessary to house the considerable retinue of retainers, male and female. Its walls contain a huge garden, inviting tufts of green appearing above their protection. In front of the palace is a stretch of rough grass a good square mile in extent. The mosque occupies a central position: opposite is the French Residency, and the other sides are flanked by residential quarters and streets of mean houses.

A procession approached the palace. A sultan of older days established a negro bodyguard, and the tradition has been maintained. A brass band led the way, playing fiercely. Then came the foot guards, in vivid scarlet tunics and extraordinarily baggy pantaloons. I could not calculate how many yards of woollen cloth each uniform would need, and it must be a most uncomfortable dress for wear in the Moroccan summer!

The horse guards followed, similarly attired, and mounted on smart grey Arab barbes: each man carried lance and green pennant.

They took up their positions—the foot guards near the palace, the horsemen towards the mosque. The idea was to keep the crowd about fifty yards away from the processional route, lest anyone should wish to show his devotion too blatantly: for the moment, however, people wandered freely, moving in and out of the scarlet ranks.

One of the accoutrements gave me a surprise: each man wore

a pipe-clayed belt with a brass buckle: to my amazement, I saw it embossed with the British arms, complete with *Dieu et mon droit*. I moved on to the next man, but his buckle carried a French insignia. The explanation was forthcoming later.

After a period of desuetude, the negro guard was revived by that enterprising Scotsman, Caid Maclean, who became involved in Moroccan affairs early in the present century. He designed a uniform on traditional lines—but with blue pantaloons—and bought British belts and buckles. The French naturally imposed their own patterns when they took over Morocco, but the British belts were too good to waste, and some of them still survive.

Now police shepherded the people appropriately behind the lines of negro guards. One group of notables, rather conspicuous in their snow-white *djellabahs*, were allowed to remain near the central path. The crowd was not nearly as large as I had expected: it numbered between two or three thousand, including a contingent of American tourists, who saw the ceremony only through the viewfinders of their cine-cameras: if these were loaded with glorious Kodacolor, they had ample scope.

The band struck up a martial melody, apparently a compromise between Western and Arab rhythms. From the gate of the palace emerged a small procession, escorting a carriage: a detachment of guards joined the march: the Sultan was going to the mosque.

The notables, lined up in a long row, bowed waist-deep as their sovereign passed. The men in the crowd clapped casually, but the women began to make that weird sound which never fails to startle me: they cried a continuous you-you-you in high-pitched voices, like the disciplined chirruping of powerful sparrows, rising to the shriek of an air-raid siren. It is a sign of respect, but I can imagine occasions when the you-yous could be disconcerting. There is an old legend about an invading army which invested a city while most of the men were away. So thousands of women gathered on the parapet and you-youd so effectively that the enemy broke and fled in terror.

The mosque is not beautiful, its pointed roofs being dominated by a square tower—the delicate round minaret of the Middle East is seldom encountered in western Moslem lands. The Sultan's carriage disappeared into a side court: the prayers

began. On another side two or three hundred people were squatting by an open door, joining vociferously in the service. But most of the spectators broke ranks to buy ice-cream or sweets from itinerant vendors: I noticed the glum looks of the Coca-Cola salesman. Any comments were hidden by the gabble of the crowd, which almost drowned the chorus of the prayers.

In less than an hour the Sultan emerged, riding back to the palace on a magnificent white horse. An attendant held a purple umbrella over his head. Two men among his immediate entourage attracted my attention, as they waved long white streamers. They were the official Fly-swishers to the court: their task was to ensure that no fly disturbed the royal dignity by settling on the Sultan's face. Doubtless this was once a reasonable precaution, when Morocco had more than its share of insects. The French have declared war on flies, however, and the population is now far below other African standards. But the two Fly-swishers tenaciously cling to their ancient prerogatives. They would be interested to meet such intriguing personages as Rouge Dragon Pursuivant and other survivals from a more picturesque age.

The tourists held their postcards against the sides of the charabancs, conveying their thrills to friends—either in the joy of sharing an experience or in the expectation of arousing envy. None of them appeared to have noticed the most remarkable feature of this Moroccan occasion: that the Sultan's negro body-guard was under the command of a French officer.

III

Rabat is the latest in a long series of Moroccan capitals. While not as spectacular as some, it is at least fairly representative of the country in its present stage of development.

It dates from the twelfth century, when its full name was Bibat el Fath[1]—'the Camp of Victory'—so-called to commemorate Moorish victories in Spain. Its subsequent history was

[1] It is always difficult, and sometimes impossible, to represent Arabic names satisfactorily in the Roman alphabet. In general I have followed the French style, save where an Arab word has already been popularly anglicized—as *pasha* (French *pacha*). On the other hand, the anglicized word *caliph* is too far from the Arab *khalifa* to warrant its use.

desultory: some sultans ignored it, others favoured it. Thus periods of splendour were followed by years of neglect. This unhappy state is reflected in its architecture, for masterpieces of Moroccan art are flanked by the meanest of streets.

It is significant that the first attentions of a visitor are almost automatically attracted by the new European quarter, a city of southern France deposited in Morocco, though with many Moorish touches—even the Cathedral fits snugly into the scene. The Residence, the group of administrative buildings, is even more harmonious. The buildings are European but their decorations are Moroccan, and the profusion of trees and flowers provide a gracious setting.

The *medina*, or native quarter, is cramped behind its long lines of crenellated walls, the colour of chocolate which has melted and again solidified—milk chocolate. Its streets are narrow, and only here and there is wheeled traffic possible. There is little of the picturesque—this applies to the streets of most Moroccan towns; the residential streets present a long series of blank walls, competently planned to defeat prying eyes. Most are made of pressed earth or dried mud, but a coat of whitewash hides the suggestion of poverty.

The *souks*, or markets, are interesting—though they cannot compare with those of Fez or Marrakesh. In places the street so narrows that not even a laden donkey can pass: rushes stretching from roof to roof provide a gentle shade. The shops are tiny—some no more than large boxes. In many of them artisans ply their trade—Rabat is famous for its leather work.

There is always fascination in a *souk*. Peasants from the countryside are making their purchases with great deliberation, every transaction preceded by a process of lengthy bargaining. Veiled women, their eyes shining brightly above their veils, finger western dress materials, which are gradually gaining favour at the expense of local homespuns. A woman pushes a crippled beggar in a home-made go-cart; another leads a blind man along a line of butchers' stalls: each tradesman cuts off a sliver of meat and adds it to the growing pile in the beggar's palm, for the Koran decrees generosity to the incapacitated. An old man sings, or wails, to the accompaniment of a primitive two-stringed guitar. Movement is continuous: yet there are always plenty of men with nothing urgent to do, squatting in

silent contemplation, or sleeping in any yard of shade which the road affords.

From the square minaret of the mosque the *muezzin* announces the hour of prayer: men wash their feet at a decorated fountain before entering the mosque. Some artisans and merchants halt their labour and kneel to the East, their lips moving in silent prayer. The women continue with their work, carrying loads on their heads, or filling pitchers from the fountains —pipes of running water against a colourful background of decorated tiles.

Adjoining the *medina* is a quarter which is a miniature city in itself—the *kasbah* of the Oudaias. The Moroccan *kasbah* was the equivalent of the English feudal castle. It housed not only the baronial lord but his retainers and their families. To-day the lord may be missing, but the living quarters of the *kasbah* are still occupied to repletion: the sturdy walls culminate in a monumental gateway. They also contain a pleasant garden, filled with gorgeous flowers of tropical hues, and flanked by gracious buildings. One of these was once a School of Piracy, but is now occupied by honest craftsmen and a museum of their work.

Rabat skirts the gentle waters of the Oued Bou Regreg, the *kasbah* guarding the promontory where the river joins the sea. Yet the scene is dominated by a high tower a mile inland. There was a sultan who planned to commemorate his victories in Spain by building triplet towers. The Koutoubia at Marrakesh survives in all its grandeur, the Giralda at Seville has been spoiled by later alterations, and the Hassan Tower at Rabat was never completed. Its proportions are consequently incorrect—it lacks the diminishing superstructure which would have reduced its heaviness, but its red stone is delightful, the interlaced carvings giving a glimpse of the architect's dream of beauty. At its foot are the ruins of an enormous mosque. Like the tower, it was never finished. Moreover, most lines of sultans systematically destroyed the work of their predecessors, and buildings which escaped wilful damage suffered as severely from neglect.

Yet to me the most charming corner of Rabat lies outside the walls. Here, on a slope down to the riverside, is an ancient cemetery called the Chella, ensconced within its own walls. Part of the interior is wild and overgrown: part is cultivated, and

bears generous crops. It has the atmosphere of age as well as the peace of the dead. The Romans buried their warriors here, and the carved stones attest their valour. A tiny minaret crowns the ruins of an ancient mosque, and by pools of green water lie some of the Arab and Berber leaders who spread the fame of Morocco throughout the known world. In one ornamented chapel is buried Abou el Hassan, the 'Black Sultan': and his favourite wife, a Christian slave who was renamed 'Sunshine of the Morning'. There is even a legend that St. John was buried here, but I could find no trace of evidence to support it. Below the necropolis is a great garden, watered by a little stream. Given water and sun, good ground will produce amazingly: the size and colours of the flowers are almost incredible to the English eye—every hue that Nature ever conceived.

I liked the Chella best at the hour before sunset. Then I had it almost to myself. The soft rays enriched the warmth of its ruddy walls: the quiet was intense, disturbed only by the clacking of storks' beaks or the muttered prayers of a belated pilgrim making his way from shrine to shrine. Nowhere in Morocco, and in few places elsewhere, is there such peace.

It is needed. Moslems spend so much time in contemplation that they often neglect action: Christians live on action, and too often forget to think. Rabat impels a hundred reflections. One came from the lips of an old man in the Chella, almost as the last rays of the sun touched its walls. He had the air of a philosopher, and his words corroborated this.

"There is bustle in Rabat today," he said. "Even in the *medina*. And in the new town rulers plan novelties for our country. Yet Rabat is ancient: maybe here, with its dead, we are nearer to its true heart. You have read its history? There are lessons to be learned—there always are, from history, but today men neglect them in their chase after the latest novelty. Did you know that Rabat was once so prosperous that even the dogs had chains of gold? But the people, in satisfaction with their wealth, forgot to till the fields—who would want to labour when the dogs had chains of gold? So the people died, for in time of famine gold is a poor substitute for grain."

CHAPTER TWO

PIRATE LAIR

I

So this was where Robinson Crusoe was held prisoner! So, too, by another tradition, was Cervantes. Salé, or Salli, or Sallee, looked very peaceful as I surveyed it across the river from Rabat. A footbridge serves for pedestrians, but wheeled traffic must go a couple of miles upstream to cross.

I approached from the seashore. In a salt-water pool men were washing sheep skins, beating them intermittently with sticks, and then hanging them out to dry. But the lagoon which once served as a pirate harbour had silted up centuries ago; its site now houses the Jewish quarter, or *mellah*.

I wandered among the dunes: huge Atlantic breakers were dashing against pigmy rocks. Adjoining the sea is a vast cemetery. The tombstones are rectangular, and carved in geometric patterns—very different from the short, plain pillars I had seen in Moslem graveyards further East.

Flanking the cemetery stretch the stout walls of Salé, which had more than once felt the weight of avenging Christian cannon. The first centuries of its history had been normal enough. Founded when Edward the Confessor was building Westminster Abbey, it was for long a flourishing port. Here came the long camel caravans carrying the riches of Africa to the Atlantic coast. Then Salé got involved in the Spanish wars: from these to piracy was an easy step. The Salli Rovers were the scourge of the seas: with superb effrontery, they even raided in the English Channel. More than once the city was bombarded: at one time the Spaniards landed and captured the place. But the Christians hated each other more than they feared the pirates, and there was no co-operation in their reprisals. Indeed, it was not uncommon for English seamen to accept service with the Salli Rovers in order to strike a blow

against Spain. It has been claimed that the first warning of the Spanish Armada was given by a pirate ship from Salli—which happened to have an English captain.

In those days piracy paid handsome dividends. Apparently it does so to-day, though its forms are less crude. By 1627 Salli had actually incorporated Rabat, and had become an independent kingdom. Its activities had been stimulated by thousands of refugees from Spain, burning for revenge. Rich prizes were brought into the harbour. Christian slaves were auctioned on the wharves. The citizens of Salli took their profession so seriously that they established a School of Piracy!

Yet, as Hollywood is instructed to insist, Crime Does Not Pay —at least, not for ever. The degenerate Christians actually began to fight back—there were undignified occasions when the Salli Rovers became not the captors but the prisoners. In such bad times it was not difficult for Rabat to break away from the rule of Salli, and both towns became part of the sultan's domains. In 1765 the French got really annoyed at a new series of outrages, and their retaliatory bombardment of the pirate lair was discouraging: the English followed, even more decisively. By the end of the century the ancient profession had almost lapsed. The silting-up of the harbour alone would have killed the trade, as it did more legitimate enterprises.

The pacific spirit of Salli, now become Salé, was illustrated by my first contact. I passed through the ancient walls close to a massive fort—which was being converted into a café! A space had been cleared behind the battlements ready for the erection of brightly coloured umbrellas, and one of the casemates was to serve as a Coca-Cola bar. Round about the fort lay half a dozen old cannon which any museum might envy: some genius had the idea that tourists would esteem the fort more if one of the cannon were suitably mounted. For this reason five local men were dragging it out of a casemate. True, they were not making much progress, for each of the five wanted to be foreman.

Close by was the *koubba*, or tomb, of the holy marabout Sidi Ben Ashir. Most of his holy works had been for the benefit of lunatics, and even today his beneficent influence lingers. His decorated shrine is visited for prayer by people who have insane relatives. Further, there are a number of permanent inmates,

for the *koubba* serves as the local asylum. I was saddened as I surveyed men and women in cages, like animals in a zoo—though not, of course, open to the public gaze. The Moslems are kind to their madmen, whose minds 'are with Allah', but these men and women were violent, and were necessarily under restraint. At one time they were chained in their bare cubicles, but the French have induced a more humane treatment under medical supervision.

The young man in charge was a descendant of the marabout. In a Moslem country it can be quite lucrative to belong to a holy family, and he drew a small gratuity from all visitors.

"I must say, the men in this side court seem quite different from the rest," I commented. "I noticed that they are not locked up, and they appeared to speak to me quite normally. I take it that they are milder cases."

He laughed, and led me back into the court so that the others could enjoy the joke. For these were not lunatics, but pilgrims: the *koubba* combines the function of a monastery with that of an asylum, and pilgrims from afar could stay there for twenty-one days, to worship at the marabout's shrine.

II

There was a vast empty space within the great walls of the city, indicative of its decline. Yet, instead of dispersing about the vacant ground, the inhabitants prefer to crowd into one corner. I made my way across another cemetery to more *koubbas*: in one a woman was crying loudly to the dead saint to heal her sick child.

In the centre of the conglomeration of flat-roofed houses was the Great Mosque, with a decorated minaret—square, as is the local custom. Its vast floor was carpeted with rush mats—a local industry—and there were many alcoves for scholastic purposes. Adjoining was an ancient *medersa*, or college, where students were lodged: its complicated decorations had become dilapidated, but renovations were in hand: an aged man worked with delicate deliberation on a pattern of miniature tiles.

The *souks* are small compared with those of the larger cities, but are no less interesting. Craftsmanship is firmly maintained

in Salé, and artisans ply their trades with their great-grandfathers' tools. Men hammered at brass and copper utensils in the making, or formed silver into delicate jewellery, or stitched the brightly coloured *babaoush*, the heelless slippers of Morocco. The tailors did favour one novelty—a sewing-machine. Apart from this, the only recent 'reform' has affected the tanners. Their vats, let into the ground, now lie unused in a dozen places: their odours were inevitably offensive, and the French persuaded them to transfer their activities to a distance. Incidentally, they also suggested the formation of a co-operative, which works well.

I passed by water-wheels which must have been centuries old. A donkey or a camel perambulates in a restricted circle, the creaking wooden mechanism thus driven raises a continuous series of buckets of water to irrigate an adjoining garden. Yet now there is piped water, and women filled their earthenware vessels from taps let into decorated backgrounds.

"This is our greatest boon," said an old man. "Water—and flowing *always*."

Another man had a slightly different outlook. "Yes," he agreed. "Our women used to waste so much time going to the well outside the city for water. Now they get it quickly, so have more time to work."

I wandered into an ancient *fonduk*, or inn, and found its cubicles fully occupied. The guests were more or less permanent, however. The population of Salé has greatly expanded in the last twenty years, and the housing shortage is acute. About five thousand people live in the primitive conditions of the *fonduks* intended for passing travellers. It is only a palliative, but they must live somewhere.

The narrow streets had recently been paved: traffic was possible only along one or two wider thoroughfares. In one an ancient minaret had been moved stone by stone a mere half-dozen yards to facilitate the flow of traffic. As an additional amenity, it was now supported by a public lavatory!

I met a French official who dilated with legitimate pride on the recent achievements. He took me to the new covered market, where tempting foodstuffs were displayed: and to a new school, where little girls were learning their lessons. Among their studies was the French language. Evidently this had not

progressed very far, for one damsel addressed me without provocation by saying, "Bon jour, *madame*."

Yet my impressions of Salé were of the trifles which can mean so much. The Jews live in their own quarter, the *mellah*, by the great fortified gateway which was once the water-gate of the port, but in the *souks* they work amicably side by side with the Moors. Nor was there the slightest sign of the animosity which friends declared I should find on every hand. A dozen men had flung me a cheery greeting spontaneously—and, so far as they knew, I was a Frenchman. And when I asked the way of a group of children, two little girls promptly took me by the hand to lead me.

Close by the mosque were some houses of obvious quality: their external walls were plain and whitewashed, but their doors were massive. I was examining the metal hand of Fatima—Mohammed's daughter—which served as the knocker, when the door opened. A man appeared, wearing a *djellabah* of fine white wool. He appeared as surprised as I was. We exchanged greetings: then, on an impulse, he shouted something, and led me across the hall into a *patio*, with shrubs and pool. The shout was presumably a warning to the women to retire to their quarters.

The *patio* was a delight, decorated with the traditional tiled patterns, and with dainty pillars supporting the upper storey of the house. The doorless rooms revealed a vista of divans and rich carpets.

I murmured my pleasure to my casual host.

"It is Andalusian, is it not?" he asked. "My ancestors were among those expelled from Cordoba. They brought ideas with them."

"Charming ideas! And the key of the house they left behind?"

"No," he smiled. "Though some of my neighbours still guard a Spanish key as their most precious heirloom, as if one day they could return to their forefathers' home."

We talked of Salé and Morocco as we sipped mint tea which a servant mysteriously produced at a minute's notice. That is to say, he brought in the necessities for making it—a round brass tray, half a dozen glasses, a silver teapot, sugar, tea, and mint. My host squatted on a cushion, taking his task seriously—soon

I was to become very familiar with the procedure. The servant poured hot water into the teapot: the host allowed it to warm the pot, then poured it out. Now he inserted half a spoonful of ordinary tea, added hot water—the tea was apparently intended to take any taste from the metal pot. Then the real business began. He stuffed mint leaves into the teapot, and rammed irregular chunks of sugar on top of them. Hot water was added, and a minute later the tea was ready. Yet the ceremony was not quite complete. He poured out a glass of tea, then poured it back: then an inch into another glass, which he tasted. Satisfied, he poured out half a glassful, which the manservant carried to me.

I do not pretend to like mint tea. It is claimed to have valuable digestive properties, but I prefer bismuth. Of course I drank it—a refusal would have been discourteous indeed. The second cup is supposed to be better than the first. We talked as we leisurely sipped the light brown beverage. At the third glass it was time to leave.

"This peace and quiet"—I indicated the gracious *patio*—"seems very far from the old history of Salé—pirates——"

"Yes. Yet the house was probably built on pirate loot. Those were strange days."

"At least it is good that there are no Salli Rovers today."

"You forget—our football team!"

CHAPTER THREE

THE MOORS IN MOROCCO

I

WHO are the Moors?

For once, the simple answer is the best. Ethnically there is no such race. The term 'Moor' is generally applied loosely to all the inhabitants of Morocco who have adopted local customs —just as the term 'British' is used to cover the English, Scots, Welsh and Irish who inhabit our islands. (Some authorities, however, apply the term 'Moor' only to the Arabs and Arabized Berbers of the plains.) The principal racial stocks in Morocco are Berber and Arab, the first easily predominating: the variety of skins ranges from white to the deepest black. Nor is this remarkable: Arabs and Berbers have inter-married—and, strangely, their children are often darker than either of their parents: over the last thousand years extraneous blood has been introduced—from negro women as concubines, Christian slaves of all nationalities, Jews from Asia and Spain—ostracized, though their women were seized for the harems. There is small cause for wonder, therefore, that there is no such thing as a Moroccan 'type'. In a dozen men you may note as many ethnic distinctions: even in a single family. If your light-skinned wife produces children ranging from near-white to negro, this is no more than a manifestation of Mendelian theories, and implies no reflection on her virtue.

But who *are* the Moors? We must consider the answer in greater detail, for it weighs heavily on the events of today and tomorrow.

There are few reminders of the cavemen who may have been the earliest inhabitants of Morocco. The first people to enter the recorded history of the country were the Berbers—this is a fact of great importance today, for Berber stock preponderates. (Hence the term Barbary—but *not* barbarian!)

The Berbers were an Aryan 'white' race, probably emigrating from different parts of Europe in a series of 'waves', for while most of them exhibit Southern European characteristics, there are obvious Nordic admixtures. The date of the immigration is not known, but Egyptian inscriptions of 1700 B.C. refer to the Berbers in different regions across North Africa. On Egyptian monuments they are shown with the blonde features still encountered today. They were a village people, with loyalty restricted to their tribe—which is still almost true.

After Phoenician and Roman occupations, there came a succession of Arab invasions—we shall consider them in another section. The impact of the Arabs on the native stock was limited, save in the effects of their religion—and, with it, their language: the Berbers embraced Islam, and were associated with the Arabs in some of the 'holy' wars of conquest: hence a too common assumption that Berbers and Arabs are almost identical, or at least very closely related. Where the two peoples were in closest contact, as on the Moroccan plains, there was inter-marriage and mutual adoption of ideas; here the Arabic language was almost universally accepted with the Koran. In the mountains, however, the Berbers have retained their racial purity to a surprising degree.

Their language is quite distinct from Arabic: it is but little removed from the extinct Hamitic speech from which all others of this family are derived. The alphabet has thirty-six letters, and the grammar is peculiar. Some scholars claim to have traced a linguistic and phonetic resemblance between Berber and Gaelic. In Morocco, Berber is emphatically a spoken language—only a very small minority of the people can write in it. It uses four main dialects with dozens of local variations. Incidentally, the local Moghrebic Arabic is by no means pure, and is understood by real Arabs only with difficulty.

My synopsis is a simplification of the linguistic position. Some Berbers speak only their own language—or, rather, a dialect. Others, with Berber as their native tongue, use the local Moghrebic Arabic as a *lingua franca*. This is at least a useful practice, but the dialects are so varied that a Riff Berber would scarcely be able to understand a man from the Shleuh region further south.

Many local customs of centuries ago still survive. The village

is the Berber state—and, until the French discouraged the practice, was often at war with other villages. The organization is democratic—almost communistic. Land is often owned by a family in common. There is an age-old system of mutual assistance on the farms, and a village provides its own modest social services, including care of the old and poor. Local power lies in the village council, composed of all males old enough to observe the fast of Ramadan—usually at sixteen. An *amin*, or mayor, is elected from one of the leading families—often the office has become hereditary, but the vote of the poor Berber in the council counts for as much as that of the richest. A number of villages form a tribe, and sometimes the tribes may be linked in loose federations—so loose that they may break asunder at the slightest stress. Despite the introduction of French officials into the rural areas, the pattern of Berber life has changed but little in its basic character. It differs in nearly all details from the autocratic rule generally favoured by the Arabs.

The two cultures differ. The Berbers have been singularly lacking in artists and writers, but are good craftsmen in metals, wood, pottery and weaving. Their houses are often substantial —a solid contrast with the tents of the nomad Arabs. Nevertheless, the differences cannot be pressed too far. There were Berber tribes so successfully Arabized as to become nomadic: there were Arab tribes which settled down with the Berbers as agriculturalists, and even adopted the Berber tongue. Every statement made about the Moors is true of some, but none is true of all.

Although the Berbers adopted the Moslem religion with fervour, their observances are not as strict as those of the Arabs. Their women go unveiled: they eat and drink forbidden things, and do not always observe the traditional fasts. They pay more reverence to saints, both male and female. Almost every village is built close to the tomb of one of these, and disputes as to the relative importance of local saints have often led to fierce blood-feuds or tribal wars.

As will be noted more than once in this record, Berbers and Arabs differ in physical and mental characteristics. The Arabs are aesthetic and intellectual, with a warm sense of beauty, but —perhaps therefore—are less fond of manual labour. The

Berbers are good workers, simple, and manly, and fine soldiers. Of the French Moroccan troops, the majority are Berbers. As we shall see, this could have a profound effect on the confused situation at present developing.

Each distinction between Arab and Berber characteristics is variously interpreted: every incident can be and usually is presented to 'prove' opposing arguments. To quote but one example which will recur in our record: in 1930 the French decided that the patently Berber tribes should be ruled according to their ancient tribal customs. There were ample grounds for this decision. The Sultans of Morocco had always adopted the Koranic Law of Islam, which is still the legal basis of common law in the mixed regions of Morocco. But the edicts of the Sultans meant little or nothing in the southern Berber regions. The French reversion to the traditional rules was certainly welcomed there. In many districts, indeed, it was no more than a recognition of long-prevailing conditions. But to the Nationalists the move was yet another example of the French policy of 'divide and rule'—the idea being to split the Moors into two discordant factions.

The procedure is thus fervently presented as (*a*) a logical and moral piece of statesmanship much desired by the people concerned, (*b*) a devilish piece of Machiavellian chicanery. You can take your choice—or, better still, reserve judgment until further evidence becomes available. Yet the fact that there *are* potential racial cleavages in Morocco cannot be denied: whether the French have widened them, and whether they could be overcome, are quite different questions.

Nevertheless, the word 'racial' needs immediate qualification. In Morocco there are perhaps a few hundred people who could claim to be of pure Arab stock, and maybe a few hundred thousand of undiluted Berber blood. The rest are mixed—often very mixed. The distinction most clearly marked is that of language. Less than 40 per cent of the Moroccans still use the Berber tongue.[1] These, even if their stock is mixed, usually gravitate towards the traditional Berber way of life and line of

[1] An official estimate made in 1949 gave 22 per cent of the native population as speaking Berber only; a further 14 per cent spoke Berber as their mother tongue, but understood a local Arab dialect as well. Of the 64 per cent who spoke Arabic as their first language, an undetermined proportion had a smaller or larger knowledge of Berber.

thought. The rest (excepting European and Jews) speak Arabic, though their blood may be Berber—as it usually is. With the language they have accepted, to a greater or lesser degree, Arab ideas and customs: yet it is frequently possible to note the clash of inherited and acquired ideas.

Where inherited characteristics prevail, the Berber is intelligent but unsophisticated, the Arab a born politician and debater. The Berber has few intellectual pursuits, and is essentially practical: the Arab leaning is to law and philosophy rather than to the sciences. The Berbers are easily moved to an emotional cause, while the Arabs are fundamentally materialists. In accepting Islam, the Berbers maintained many pagan beliefs: the power of Nature is featured in a hundred stories and customs, with ancient beliefs in spirits, good and evil. All this could lead to division were the population true Arab and Berber, but its complications are astonishing when in between there are dozens of degrees of Arabized-Berber.

Thus it becomes obvious that too precise talk about Arabs and Berbers can be misleading. More than once the cleavage of ideas has been artificially exaggerated. In this book the terms 'Arab' and 'Berber' in Morocco are applied according to the local classification—the division being largely linguistic and subject to many and varied qualifications.

For that matter, I felt that the most important cleavage in Morocco was neither racial nor linguistic: nor was it confined to this country. It was the age-old quarrel between town and country, always latent in a peasant land. A hundred times in Moroccan history it has expressed itself in bloodshed. Until forty or fifty years ago, the prospects of looting a city were enough to bring armed tribesmen flocking from all corners of the country. The French have severely discouraged this practice, but the idea has not been eradicated from the Moroccan mind. Man is often closer than he knows to his history: in Morocco this is blatantly true—the gap between the anarchy of the past and the uneasy order of the present is narrow, and the bridge across it is still flimsy.

This cleavage is emphasized by the fact that Arab ideas prevail most strongly in the towns, whereas many of the rural areas are preponderantly Berber. Hence what is often assumed to be an Arab-Berber clash is no more than the traditional hostility of

the peasant for the townsman—especially for the official or the wealthy merchant.

II

Even at the expense of occasional repetition later, a thumb-nail sketch of Moroccan history is advisable here. Like the point raised in the previous section, the past of Morocco is immensely important as a background to the events of to-day: the story of the last fifty years, in particular, is vital to an understanding of the events of tomorrow.

We have passed lightly over the Carthaginian and Roman occupations, which covered only the northern region and coastal areas. Then, in the fifth century A.D. the Vandals and Visigoths overran the country and established a very loose suzerainty over the independent Berber tribes.

Events in the East began a course which was eventually to make a dramatic change in the Moroccan story. After the death of Mohammed, the Arabs determined to establish an Islamic empire: the sword rather than moral suasion was the chosen instrument of conversion. By A.D. 642 Egypt had been seized: thirty years later the Arabs were established in Tunisia, and soon their advanced parties were probing Morocco. A more serious invasion began in A.D. 706. There was some fighting, but save in isolated tribes the Berbers were unorganized. Further, the new religion made a great appeal to their own martial instincts. Thus when the first Moslem forces landed in Spain, three-quarters of the troops were Moroccan Berbers. Their first victories over the Christian armies were delusively easy: Spain was overrun, and the invaders plunged into the heart of the Frankish lands, to be decisively checked at Poitiers.

Once in contact with new ideas, the Berbers advanced rapidly. The defeat at Poitiers was a severe setback to Arab domination: seven years after it, in A.D. 739, some Berber tribes set up their own ruler in Morocco. The organization was weak, however, and the tribesmen turbulent.

In the meantime all was not well in the ancestral home of Islam: many factions still disputed the right of succession to the Prophet. One of Mohammed's descendants, Moulay Idriss

ben Abdallah, was defeated in battle and roamed as a fugitive across North Africa. On his arrival in Morocco he was hailed with delight by some of the local tribes: a kinsman of the Prophet was just the man to rally the discordant Moslems. But within three years he was poisoned by an emissary of the Caliph of Bagdad, Haroun-el-Raschid, who does not feature in history as romantically as he does in legend.

The second Moulay Idriss founded Fez, and united the Berbers of Northern Morocco into a kingdom. The dynasty survived for nearly two centuries, but the period was one of confusion, with tribal chiefs changing their loyalties at whim. Then, five years before the Battle of Hastings, another wave of warriors swept over North Africa into Morocco—Moslems, but of Berber stock. They carried their conquest into Spain, where they subdued their co-religionists as well as the Christians. In Morocco the principal monument of this Almoravid régime is the city of Marrakesh, which they made their capital.

Next came the turn of a local Berber tribe, the Zenata, from the Atlas Mountains region: its dynasty was known as the Almohades. This produced some wise and able rulers: we shall see some of their architectural achievements at Fez. Over the years their power was dissipated by internal strife. By the middle of the fifteenth century a significant development occurred: Europe began to be interested in Morocco, and the Portuguese established trading posts along the coast.

The Moslem cause was failing: by the end of the century Moorish power in Spain was finally broken, and both Spain and Portugal obtained footholds in Northern Africa. The Berber dynasty was overthrown in the resentment and confusion, and its successor—the Saadi line of sultans—was of mixed Arab-Berber stock, and claimed Sherifian status: that is, descent from Mohammed.

For a hundred and fifty years Morocco remained a power in North Africa, for the Saadis produced some notable rulers. After the inevitable internecine strife, they were succeeded in 1649 by the Filali or Alouite dynasty—which is still on the throne. It claimed Sherifian descent through an Arabian family, but its members had made themselves chiefs of Berber tribes in Southern Morocco. Some of the Alouite sultans were remarkable men—in more ways than one. Later we shall encounter

Moulay Ismail: among his distinctions was the well-founded claim to be the father of well over a thousand children. Among his other activities was the formation of a professional army of negro slaves, which he garrisoned in *kasbahs*, or castles, in threatened parts of the country—the threats might come from without or within. He also recruited a foreign legion—which included Christians.

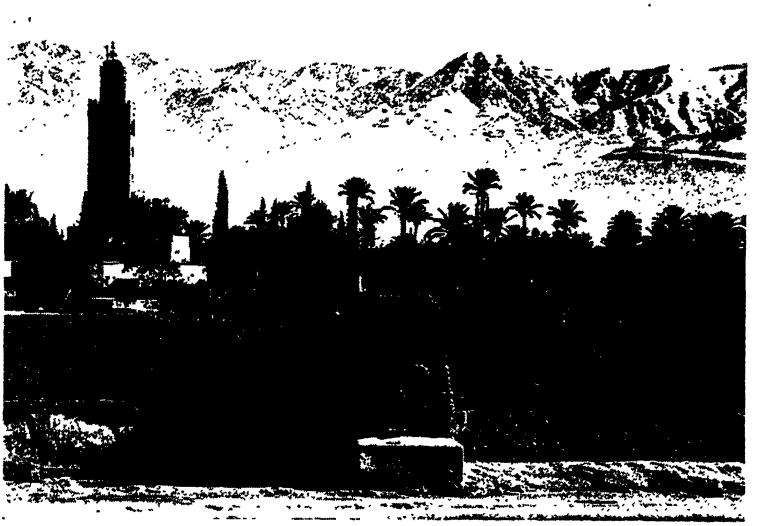
At the height of its power the dynasty was strong enough to drive out the intruding Spaniards and Portuguese. Nevertheless, foreign commerce was encouraged, and European traders were accorded special privileges. Treaties of commerce were negotiated, and were to lead to rare quarrels between the European rivals for trade and power.

But by the eighteenth century the power of Morocco was declining. In Europe a cliché declared that trade followed the flag, but the sultans discovered that flags followed traders. As a sign of coming events, in 1767 the French secured a treaty by which their consuls were given precedence over all others. Sixty years later the French conquered Algeria—which, under the Almohades had once been a Moroccan province.

The era is represented in Moroccan nationalist propaganda as one of selfish and immoral European penetration. Yet Morocco asked for trouble: in those days a state which was weak internally simply invited foreign intervention. Moorish pirates were not content with harrying ships at sea: they landed on the French and Spanish coasts—and even in Devon and Cornwall!—and carried off their captives as slaves. No civilized country was likely to submit to such provocation: from time to time a fleet would bombard a pirate lair, and a new treaty would be forced from the sultan. It might not mean much in practice at the time, but it provided legal cover for intervention later.

Yet the prime cause of Morocco's misfortunes was her own weakness. The system of government was supine, that of taxation elementary. The Koran denounced secular taxation as immoral, and the contributions to the sultan's government were supposed to be voluntary. Successive rulers, however, discovered plenty of methods of inducing recalcitrant subjects to pay their dues or more, and accepted 'loans' from abroad which could more accurately be regarded as bribes.

2. Berber transport



3. Marrakesh, the Koutoubia, and the Atlas

4. At the Glaoui's *diffa*—dancing boys

5. —and girls

The area ruled by the sultan depended largely on his own personality and activity. Tribes were continuously in revolt, and in the Berber regions the authority of the sultan was shadowy indeed. Corruption and incompetence were the outstanding features of local rulers. For long periods and over wide areas the feudal system of central government broke down, and tribes were governed by their own chiefs and laws.

Nature abhors a vacuum; so does power politics. A country in financial difficulties can always obtain aid—at a price. Foreign loans to Morocco were hedged with political conditions. The lapse of law led to outrages against Europeans, many of which became the pretext for new demands.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century British influence in Morocco was strong. However, in 1904 a political 'deal' was made with France, our rival in Egypt. In effect, France gave Britain a free hand in Egypt in return for a like favour in Morocco. The important clause, affecting future status and present discussion, reads: "The French Government declares that it is not its intention to change the political status of Morocco. On the other hand, His Britannic Majesty's Government recognizes that it belongs to France notably, as a power conterminous with Morocco to a vast extent, to see to the tranquillity of the country, and to lend it her assistance for all the administrative financial and military reforms it is in need of."

Next, France proceeded to make a treaty with Spain, recognizing the special Spanish interest in the northern area of Morocco. But now Germany was disquieted. Very late in entering the colonial 'scramble' for Africa, she could not bear to see her rivals increase their influence. Kaiser Wilhelm II made a spectacular visit to Tangier, but the subsequent Conference of Algeciras recognized France's 'special position' in Morocco, though commercial equality was promised to all nations.

The French-sponsored reforms were delayed and almost frustrated by the weakness of the régime and the internal turmoil. The Sultan's authority had always depended on his own personal prestige, and a succession of weak rulers had reduced it to little more than the control of the principal towns. Tribes revolted on slight provocation: others ignored the sultan's officers. Some attacked European settlements, estab-

lished by treaty with the Sultan, and thus invited retribution from the offended power.

One such 'incident' led to a French and Spanish occupation of Casablanca in 1907. A year later the internecine strife reached a new peak. The Sultan, Moulay Abdul Aziz, was deposed by his half-brother, Moulay Hafid, and fled to the French for protection. Recovering his nerve, he attempted a march on Marrakesh. Had it succeeded, Morocco would have been divided under two sultans: but as soon as he left French protection Moulay Abdul Aziz was betrayed and narrowly escaped death. Again he retired to a French zone of interest—to serve as a useful counter against Moulay Hafid.

The new ruler was unhappy in his charge. The tribes openly flouted his authority: even in Fez he aroused little enthusiasm. The French and Spaniards were now ensconced in coastal settlements obtained by treaty bargaining. Moulay Hafid lost his nerve, and with it all hope. A new revolt in the neighbourhood of Fez itself so alarmed him that he called directly on the French for assistance—by that time his authority scarcely extended beyond the walls of the city: his country was bankrupt, what remained of its administration was a medieval anachronism, and its affairs were in hopeless confusion. An expedition released Fez from the immediate threat: then, on March 30th, 1912, a formal treaty was signed, establishing a French protectorate over Morocco.

III

In the circumstances of the time, someone had to do it. The Germans were ready and anxious. Months before the treaty was signed occurred the famous 'Agadir Incident' (July 1st, 1911), which nearly precipitated the first World War three years too early. The German gunboat *Panther* appeared off the port to 'protect German interests'. The threat was obvious, but the Germans were not prepared to push their claims to the limit. After long negotiation, they too agreed to give France a 'free hand' in Morocco, virtually the assumption of a protectorate. The price for German benevolence was a slice of the French Congo.

Next the French had to settle with Spain: but here a previous secret treaty came into force, allocating to Spain the northern section of Morocco. Tangier was given the status of an international port. It is important, in view of recent developments, to note that Spanish Morocco is in effect a small province sub-let by France.

Yet the French were only at the beginning of their troubles. The Sultan's authority might have been vague, but he was now in infidel hands: the hatred of Europeans at last burst all restraints. French civilians were murdered in Fez itself, and armed tribal forces descended on the city.

The situation was saved after sharp fighting. The French government had made an admirable appointment when they sent General Lyautey to Morocco as Resident-General. A skilled and understanding administrator as well as a brave soldier, he gradually restored order in the central districts. But Sultan Moulay Hafid had now become a nervous wreck: he abdicated, and his brother Moulay Yussef was selected by the French as the new sultan.

Tribal revolts continued: one threatened Fez, and another captured Marrakesh. These threats were successfully countered, but many of the tribal areas lay beyond the zone of French control—as they had so often been beyond that of the sultans. Before the 'pacification' could be completed—or even properly begun—the first World War opened. The French government, needing every available soldier, suggested to Lyautey that he should retire to the coastal areas, but he decided to hold on to such towns as he had occupied. Many tribes were quick to perceive the new opportunities: others were roused by German agents, well supplied with cash. It was a remarkable feat on the part of Lyautey's depleted forces to hold and at last to subdue a long series of revolts. Had the Moors once acted in cohesion, the French might have been forced to withdraw: but the tribal leaders hated each other as much as they did the French: sometimes more.

Lyautey pursued his advantage, subduing some tribes and winning over others, especially when victory in Europe ended German interference and permitted wider operations. He envisaged the country as two distinct regions: *Maroc utile* was the fertile area west of the High and Middle Atlas Mountains.

and *Maroc inutile* the near-desert country to the east. By 1923 the first was under control. Now he applied his 'Berber policy' to the other section: he met force with force, but as soon as an area was occupied he was at pains to restore its economy: many of the Berber chiefs came over to him—some because he moved in the name of the Sultan, others because they disliked the Sultan. One of his most powerful supporters was Thami el Glaoui—we shall meet him later. His family had been Berber chieftains in the Atlas for centuries, and was noted for the political astuteness of its members. Local legend declares that when foreign intervention became serious and was obviously to become dominant, four Glaoui brothers thought out a subtle scheme: one took the Spanish side, one the French, one the British, and one the German. Thus, whichever country eventually gained control of Morocco, the Glaoui family would be certain to conserve its lands. Thami backed the French: consistent in this policy, he has been amply rewarded for his prescience.

'Useful' Morocco was calmed and controlled without serious hindrance, but the outer regions resisted stubbornly, and their 'pacification' was not completed until 1934. In the meantime the Spaniards were experiencing even greater difficulties in their allotted zone, and their ill-equipped and badly led armies suffered catastrophic defeats at the hands of the Riff Berbers. But the Riff leader, Abd-el-Krim, was over-confident and over-ambitious. His victories, and his complete control of the Riff area, suggested ambitions of becoming sultan of all Morocco. But Marshal Lyautey was quite different from the Spanish commanders; further, many Berber tribes now supported him. The Riffs fought with great courage and skill, and were a far more serious danger than their brothers of the Atlas. In 1925 the French government grew panicky, and Marshal Pétain was sent out to direct the campaign. He organized a joint Franco-Spanish thrust—Abd-el-Krim's diplomacy had been founded on playing off France against Spain. After more sanguinary fighting the Riff leader was defeated.

Reputations can be made or broken in Morocco. Once made, they linger long. The days of Lyautey are still recalled almost affectionately by most Moors: we have only mentioned his enlightened colonial policy, but 'back to Lyautey' has been a

Moroccan rallying cry against some of his reactionary successors. And Abd-el-Krim remains a legend of a different kind. After long years of exile in Egypt, he is once again surveying the Moroccan scene. However, he is old and sick, so that the present confusion may not revive his ancient dreams of power.

IV

One other subject needs a mention before we plunge into an examination of the Moroccan scene.

The French got the whole of the country under control, and established a system of government based largely upon local custom—we shall see it at work. Lyautey preferred to collaborate with rather than to dominate the Berber chiefs, and decentralized government came naturally enough in a country where large areas had never recognized any centralized rule. The Sultan retained wide—but nominal—authority: he has his own government, known as the Makhzen, and controls Koranic education and law and all religious issues. The real ruler is the French Resident-General, whose 'ministers' are not politicians but civil servants, and are none the worse for that. There is an embryo national council, at present with limited powers. However, measures initiated by the Resident cannot become law until they have been approved by the Sultan. That is to say, if he cared to take the risk of being obdurate, he could delay an idea indefinitely.

A recent innovation has been the appointment of a Council of Ministers, with advisory powers. The Sultan's nominees act as liaison officers with the French departments. Nevertheless the local people are not the only ones who believe that the French have moved too slowly in introducing democratic Moroccan representation into the government.

The decrees of the central authority are administered by pashas in the towns and caids in the country regions—each with a French *controlleur* at his side. Beyond the Atlas is a district still administered by French *Officiers des Affaires Indigènes*. Even when the French official is only advisory, he is still the ultimate authority.

The French launched a series of beneficent enterprises, industrial, agricultural and cultural, which have achieved remarkable success, in spite of the disturbance of a second World War. Above all, they gave to Morocco a peace which it had not known for a hundred years or more.

Yet they remained strangers in the land, Christians in a Moslem country. Nor were all Lyautey's successors as wise as he. More than once Morocco became the sport of French politics, never an edifying spectacle. Even had French conduct been perfect, moreover, Nationalist feelings in Morocco must have arisen.

It was not until 1934 that the Berber regions of Southern Morocco were 'pacified'. The same year saw the rise of the Nationalist movement. It was inevitable. When Western ideas are introduced into a backward state, the controlling power may try to limit them to technical processes and elementary education, but this is impossible. Once a man can read, the world lies open to him. All through the Arab countries of North Africa and the Middle East flowed the strong current of thoughts of freedom. The two world wars, and especially the consequent weakness of France, greatly increased its speed.

At first Nationalist ideas were moderate enough—they usually are. They were encouraged by the high-sounding polemics of the Popular Front Government in France, and by the ambiguous promises of General Franco, who should have been grateful to his Moorish soldiers. Both anticipations were unfulfilled: it is an elementary error to make unredeemed—or unredeemable—pledges.

The collapse of France in 1940 had grave effects—for Morocco is a country where authority means a great deal. The situation would have been serious but for the disunity among the Moors. A Nationalist movement depends not upon the clamouring mob, but upon its intellectuals; in Morocco they were few, and divided.

The Allied landings on North Africa in November 1942 proved to be the spur which stimulated local ideas. Local people told me that even more effective than official pronouncements like the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter was the influence of American soldiers. They did not make themselves liked, but they did talk openly about democracy, and by their living

standards showed that it was a system which could bring handsome dividends.

At such a moment the power of France was at its weakest, with the homeland torn by dissenting factions. Many of the Moroccan Nationalist groups coalesced into the Istiqlal, or Independence Party. They had a good case to argue, for the French leaders had consistently promised independence to Morocco. At first their membership was small, consisting of a number of educated men, supported by the rich merchants of Fez and the other cities. Gradually its influence spread: ironically enough, the greater the French efforts towards popular education, the wider the opportunities of Istiqlal. Its methods were not always logical or democratic: failing in its first moderate aims, it plunged rapidly into an exaggerated anti-French propaganda. There were riots and bloodshed, followed by acts of repression—and martyrs! The French seriously pushed on with beneficial reforms in administration, justice, education, and agriculture, and thousands of Moroccans benefited. But nationalism knows no logic, and is devoid of gratitude. By this time the demand for reforms had been replaced by one for independence.

Then, in January 1948, the French had their most distasteful surprise. Until then the Sultan, Sidi Mohammed Ben Youssef, had loyally accepted the protectorate. True, he owed something to the French, for in 1927 they had selected him to succeed his father, passing over his two elder brothers. They chose him because of his supposedly docile character. And now, with all his tremendous influence as Sultan and as a descendant of the Prophet, he emerged as the leader of the Nationalist movement!

The Sultan appears to have been greatly impressed by a wartime incident. As the Allied personages gathered for the Casablanca conference in 1943, he had a private talk with President Roosevelt, who spoke in the usual American terms in praise of democracy and in condemnation of 'colonialism', and made sympathetic references to the Moroccan people. When the Sultan said that he would be grateful for guidance, Roosevelt promised to do all he could. He is alleged to have stated that he was keenly interested in the question of Moroccan independence. No one could blame the Sultan if, dazzled by the power

and personality of his famous visitor, he somewhat overestimated the sentiments thus diplomatically expressed.

A few incidents need mention—we shall consider them in detail later. In April 1947, the Sultan paid an official visit to Tangier, and his speech was interpreted as a claim for the reversion of Morocco to self-government. In October 1950, he went to Paris to make a formal request for definite steps towards its independence, but achieved nothing save the rousing of Istiqlal hopes to new high levels. The situation grew so strained that in the following January General Juin, then Resident-General, asked the Sultan to disavow his apparent connection with Istiqlal. If the Sultan declined—the implication was obvious: more than one Moroccan ruler had been supplanted and replaced.

The Sultan was given time to think it over. Then Berber tribesmen began to appear outside Fez and Rabat, demonstrating against the Sultan and Istiqlal. There was a serious possibility of bloodshed when the Sultan issued a statement which formed a masterpiece of political diplomacy. He duly disclaimed 'a certain party', and dismissed some of his advisers who were known to have Nationalist leanings, but he 'allowed' it to become known that he had acted under duress. Thus the net result was to increase his popularity in Nationalist circles, who were more than ever convinced that the Sultan was with them. This may be true, but he is naturally a little more cautious.

Then, on March 30th, 1952, the anniversary of the establishment of the protectorate, Istiqlal proclaimed a 'national day of mourning'. Their authority in commercial circles was shown by the closing of Moroccan shops, and 'incidents' revealed that among their adherents were some people who were not content to rely on democratic methods. The episode aroused wide discussion, and more than once I found myself involved in the arguments. It was intended, and accepted, as a declaration that the campaign towards complete independence had been launched.

V

The geographical structure of Morocco is fairly simple. The dominant feature is formed by the Atlas Mountains, running north-east from the region of Agadir across virtually the whole width of the country. The principal range is that of the High Atlas, its peaks exceeding 13,000 feet. To the north of its central stretch is the Middle Atlas, rising to more than 10,000 feet; to the south-east, near the Atlantic coast, is the Anti-Atlas, a less important range whose principal peaks, however, exceed 10,000 feet. North and west of the mountain system stretch the great plains, the best agricultural country, with the Riff Mountains separating them from the Mediterranean coastline. South of the Atlas system is a broad region of virtual desert. Rivers are comparatively few, and some of them dry up in the summer. As always in under-developed lands, geographical features have a great influence on human life and activity. There are marked differences between the folk of the mountains and those of the plains.

The area of Morocco is about 170,000 square miles, or twice the size of Great Britain. 'About' is a proper qualification, for the parts of the southern and eastern desert frontiers are not strictly delimited. The total area includes the Spanish Zone, in the north, itself enclosing the international port of Tangier. The Spaniards also control the small coastal-desert enclave of Ifni, in the south-western corner of Morocco.

In the north, vegetation is of the Mediterranean type, with forests of oak and plantations of olives: on the higher mountains are forests of fir, maple, and cedar. Unfortunately, the woodlands have been indiscriminately cut for centuries, and there are now large areas of scrub country. In the valleys the sun and good soil depend only on adequate rainfall to produce excellent crops.

The Atlantic coastal area specializes in cereals, vegetables and fruits, and the northern slopes of the Atlas support large if now depleted forests. Beyond the Atlas ranges, save for occasional natural or artificial oases, the land is virtually desert.

The main roads are excellent, the subsidiary routes passable in good weather. There are more than 1,500 miles of railway,

much of it electrified. Bus routes between the towns are good, but in the outlying countryside the traveller must be prepared to revert to the camel, mule, donkey, or his own feet.

I planned my journey to see a cross-section of Morocco and its people, and was always ready to change my itinerary on short notice and slight provocation. I recorded on the spot my impressions of the Moroccan scene, together with such conversations as seemed to bring out points of importance: but in the main I made notes of political comments until I returned home. So many of the opinions I collected were contradictory, and needed study against the background of known facts. Most of the political issues are, therefore, dealt with in the concluding chapters.

My journey was made in April and May 1952, when events in Tunisia were causing inevitable repercussions in other North African countries. Yet there was no sense of strain or suggestion of violence in the atmosphere of Morocco. There was no question of my 'seeing what they wanted me to see'—whether 'they' were French officials or Istiqlal leaders. If I did not happen to know the Nationalist chiefs in any town, the local French officer would gladly take me along, introduce me—and leave me. From all parties and races I received nothing but help, friendship and kindly hospitality. Against this background I shall attempt to picture the Moroccan scene and its problems—some of growing urgency. Every writer claims to be objective, though from his first line his prejudices may be obvious. I claim only that I will seek to be objective in my presentation.

One interesting point is well to keep in mind—especially by those who have tended to regard Morocco as just another Arab state. The Arabic name for it is El Mogreb el Aksa—the Land of the furthest West. It is indeed the most western of all the Moslem countries. It may be that some of the original fire had been lost by the time the Islamic faith reached Morocco: it may be that the faith has been neither so fervent nor so steadfast against infiltrating creeds as in lands nearer to its source. It is certain that all ideas from the East have reached Morocco last, often diluted or distorted: this may apply to political creeds.

CHAPTER FOUR

ARABIAN NIGHTS AND DAYS

I

At the airfield at Casablanca I had been greeted by a man in a red fez, who introduced himself as Mohammed, and announced that he would drive me about Morocco as I wished. He had a good Citroen car, he said, quite accurately.

After a preliminary call at Rabat, I directed Mohammed southwards—it seemed only sensible to explore the south before the heat became oppressive. Soon I had to apply restrictive practices. Mohammed's apparent ambition was to be the first man to drive a car at supersonic speed. So, when I saw someone who looked interesting, and wanted to speak to him, it would take Mohammed half a kilometre to pull up, and by the time I got back the man might have gone home to dinner.

My first contact proved to be a Frenchman. The road passed through a large plantation of young trees.

"Yes," said the forestry officer, "this was once fertile land—up to the sixth century. Then the local people cut down all the trees, and it became a desert. Now we have replanted a forest. You realize, sir, that here you are looking at *French* Morocco."

At a garage where we halted to fill up I added another aspect to my early glimpse of Morocco.

"You will find your driver good, but too fast," said the garage owner.

"I have noticed that already!"

"The Moroccans take to machinery readily, but have no pity for it. They are too enthusiastic in arriving to consider the cost of the journey. Over-enthusiasm is always a fault, and can be deadly. I tell you—I take it that you know that the Moroccans get smaller wages than Europeans? I tell you that

it pays to hire French or Portuguese drivers for my lorries and buses at 30,000 francs a month rather than Moroccans at 15,000 francs. These men drive the heart out of the machinery."

I am no mechanic, but his advice seemed sound, so my determination to restrain Mohammed was doubled. Unfortunately we passed through long stretches of poor country, with little of interest. Once or twice I stopped at villages consisting of a dozen straw plait huts with conical roofs, or by a group of nomad tents, but generally the road invited speed.

The road skirted an American air-base. A casual acquaintance at a café declared that it had the longest runway in the world. It would take the B.36—the aircraft which is designed to carry atomic bombs—and any foreseeable development. He added, confidentially, that there was already a store of atomic bombs in Morocco, but did not reveal the source of his information.

The country degenerated into semi-desert. The infrequent villages gathered their houses behind stone walls for protection. Brown sheep, tawny cows and shaggy camels fitted into the scene, perfectly camouflaged against the background. So did the peasants and shepherds, in their dingy brown *djellabahs*.

After Benguerir the houses changed their character: they were now cubical shacks of dried mud. Another American base appeared in sight. A sergeant to whom we gave a lift volunteered the information that it was the largest in the world —five miles long. I could not argue its claims over the other.

The road climbed a range of low hills, then moved in a dead straight line over arid waterless country. Yet ahead was a pleasant sight—a great oasis of olives, palms and oranges, a vivid splash of green on a light-brown background. The sight was especially thrilling as, save for an afforestation effort in its infancy, we had not seen a tree for a hundred miles.

Now a lovely tower dominated the approaching scene: then appeared mighty walls in a rich red-brown, crenellated and buttressed. Miles beyond, yet appearing to overpower the city, was a great range of mountains—the High Atlas, its ridges flecked at their crest with snow. We drove on into Marrakesh, one of the loveliest cities in Morocco, for that matter, in all Africa: politically, better known as the home of Si Thami el

Glaoui, Pasha of Marrakesh and feudal chief of the Berber tribes of Southern Morocco.

II

I was very glad that the French Regional Chief, General d'Hauteville, went with me to the *diffa* at the pasha's palace: otherwise I might have thought that I had dreamed it.

I found awaiting me an invitation to a banquet, and at nine p.m. presented myself at the pasha's door. As is usual with Moorish houses, the entrance was undistinguished, but a series of wide passages led to halls of sheer magnificence in colourful decoration. I passed through a double line of retainers: each man carried a long curved dagger slung over his shoulder. At the end of the line were two enormous negro women.

The pasha was away in the north, but his eldest son, Si Brahim, received me. Despite the richness of the surroundings, there was no ostentation in his attire: he wore a grey woollen *djellabah* and a fez. (I could understand the discomfiture of a distinguished French visitor who once called on a famous pasha: to do him special honour, the pasha went right to the door to receive his guest—and the Frenchman handed him his coat and hat!)

Si Brahim was a man in the middle thirties, obviously of great intelligence. His personality was reserved—this is common in Morocco, where the father is very much the head of the household. Later, no doubt, Si Brahim will develop some of the dominant characteristics of the pasha.

We passed through a series of rooms, richly decorated, a fantastic contrast with the mean street without. One was fitted up as a bar: Si Brahim served his guests, but like a good Moslem, did not partake himself—though this tenet of Koranic teaching is not always observed in the Berber country. Then we adjourned to a larger hall, where eight of us squatted on divans or pouffes around a low, round table. Barefooted manservants awaited us, moving noiselessly over the thick carpets.

An attendant carried round a brass bowl and a kettle of warm water. We washed our hands, then arranged towels over our knees. The *diffa* began. Soup was served in porcelain bowls —with wooden spoons as utensils. Then followed a sight which

would make a British housewife faint—a whole sheep, quartered and roasted! I was told that it had been baked in a closed earthen oven for twenty-four hours, and it was delicious.

Knives and forks are not included in the Berber tradition of eating. We used our fingers—good manners stipulate only the first two fingers and thumb of the right hand. Si Brahim expertly guided me to the places whence the most succulent morsels could be plucked, and for the moment I forgot an interesting conversation in the consumption of about two rations of mutton. I have never tasted better: it may be that knives and forks do adversely affect the flavour.

One retainer carried off the huge oval dish: another produced a circular one, about a yard across. He lifted from it a conical cover of wicker—one of these protected all the courses—and revealed an enormous pie, covered with many layers of thin, flaky pastry. This, I gathered, had taken three days to prepare. Gradually our fingers burrowed through the pastry to encounter a substantial filling of pigeons and eggs. This dish, the *pastilla*, is the pride of the Moroccan kitchen. I was told that a famous American general appreciated it so much that he sent his own chef to learn its secrets from the Glaoui's cooks.

Next followed a great bowl, with a dozen baby chickens swimming in hot cream. This was tasty rather than satisfying—which was just as well, for to my host's delight I had partaken freely of the mutton. As a light interlude, the retainers produced slabs of fried batter, not unlike a sweet Yorkshire pudding. Surely this was the end?

But no. The perfect organization produced another dish under its gaily coloured wicker cover: it held four full-sized chickens, broiled, with olives and lemon, so tender that the meat fell to pieces in my fingers. Now the main dish followed—the traditional kous-kous, a mountain of boiled semolina grain, surmounted by a melange of vegetables.

By this time I was only pretending to eat for politeness sake. A vast *kasbah* in ice-cream was followed by local fruits—oranges, apples and bananas. Coffee and mint tea rounded off a meal at which even a black-market restaurateur would have stood aghast, but at which Haroun-el-Raschid would have felt quite at home.

Si Brahim led his guests to another baronial hall, a blaze of

colour: here we lounged on rich divans. Five dancing girls appeared in our midst: they were fair of skin and good looking, but very plump—the thinnest, I guessed, would weigh thirteen stone: all wore long brightly patterned dresses. A maestro accompanied them on an ancient violin which he held upright and played in the manner of a 'cello. The girls began to sing, a monotonous chant between a wail and a gargle. Periodically two of them stepped forward to dance: this they did standing still: the dance consisted of an energetic waggling of hips and breasts—with which all the girls were amply supplied. I could not understand the dances, but they were fairly obviously erotic, suggesting the last spasms of an orgy of passion.

Yet, even while executing motions implying lust, the girls were completely detached: their audience might not have been present—they gazed over our heads, or at one another. There was no suggestion of 'showmanship' or of a climax—music, song and dance petered out quite casually.

Now, in the next hall, which had a marble floor, appeared an orchestra of more primitive type—two ancient stringed instruments of the guitar family, and a *rehab*, a one-stringed fiddle with a semicircular bow handle. This accompanied a troupe of Shleuh boy dancers, famous throughout Southern Morocco. The youths are chosen for their effeminate appearance, but their bare feet slapped the marble floor manfully as they trod their measures.[1]

More dances, and then—in case anyone should be hungry!—more refreshments, and the evening was over. Outside the palace a bodyguard of armed retainers was drawn up for final honours. So fantastic and exciting a mixture of feudalism and the Arabian Nights I have never known.

The *diffa* had an unexpected sequel. The following evening I met one of my fellow-guests, and asked casual questions about the meaning of the dances.

"Ah, I cannot explain the movements. But there is a dancing mistress who lives in the *kasbah*—let me take you there."

He conducted me to an upper room in a narrow street; there

[1] Philip Thornton, a specialist in Oriental music, gives a very interesting account of Shleuh dances in *The Voice of Atlas* (Alexander Maclehose). He mentions the interesting theory that our own Morris dances were originally derived from Moorish (Morisco) dancing.

we were gravely received by a middle-aged woman, just running to plumpness, and two young girls of fourteen or fifteen. After the inevitable drinking of mint tea, we reclined on divans. The dancing mistress put on a gramophone record of Moroccan music—evidently this was a modern establishment.

The three women performed the same dances as we had seen the previous evening, but still I did not understand the subtleties of the sinuous movements. My friend engaged in a brief argument, and the ladies retired. Then, to my amazement—for he had given me no hint—they reappeared without their colourful but concealing robes. The nude bodies of the two girls were lithe and could have been graceful: yet it was the plump lady who best exhibited the dances. The muscles of her hips and stomach progressed in a series of waves: she swung her breasts vigorously from side to side. Now there could be no doubt about it—the dance was indeed erotic.

The performers were again completely detached. They showed not the slightest perturbation—evidently this was not the first exhibition of its kind. But I am unused to such occasions, and I admit that I found it somewhat disconcerting to congratulate, thank, and say good night to three respectable ladies whose combined wardrobe would not have clothed an ant.

III

The Arabian Nights atmosphere was continued the following day. If there is another place in the world like the Djemaa el Fna, it must be in Bagdad—a vast open space, part market, part entertainment centre. The first function predominates in the morning, the second in the evening, and both are fascinating.

The stalls are flimsy and temporary compared with the shops in the adjoining *souks*. Usually a sloping wicker mat serves to give shade to the vendor. Some stalls are conventional, if the eating booths offer dishes strange to European eyes—though the fried batter circles might have tempted me had I not seen them made. Nor was I attracted by the wares of a biscuit maker who, to give his produce a pattern, pressed the yielding dough against his navel.

A row of dentists competed for trade. Each had a pile of

6. Doctor and medicines

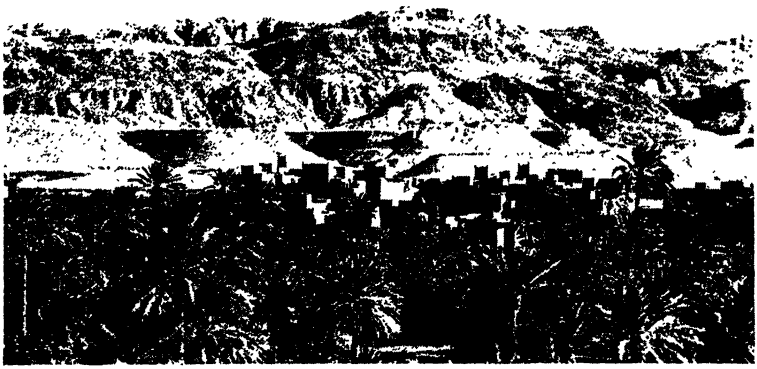
7. Story-teller and audien

8. Barber-bloodsucker and victim

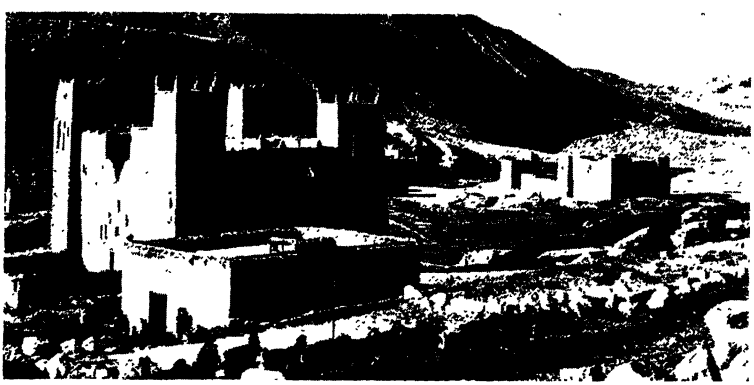
9. Snake-charmer

In the Djemaa el Fna, Marrakesh

10. Alternative Berber transport



11. The *Ksar*, Tinerhir



12. *Kasbah*—with windows

extracted teeth on a box before him, as tributes to his experience and skill—this is also a Chinese practice. I saw one unhappy victim. He squatted on the ground, held down firmly by a hefty assistant. The dentist then began to shout loudly—not so much to attract attention as to drown the howls of his customer.

The letter writers were less ebullient, but the barbers just as bloody: not when they plied their trade, for their razors cleared every hair from the head as well as from the chin of a client. But blood-letting is a favourite Moroccan pastime, and is believed to do much good. The barber makes two incisions at the back of the head, and attaches by suction two contraptions not unlike metal pipes. The bowl of the pipe touches the wound, and the barber sucks gently at the tube end, allowing the blood to collect in the bowl.

'Doctors' were present in force. 'Medicine men' or 'sorcerers' might be a more accurate description. Their medicines, laid out on the ground before them, included such infallible remedies as dried snake skins, bones of magical beasts, tubes of brilliantly coloured powders, and charms. It does not matter whether you need indigestion powder or a love philtre—the doctor is at your service.

One practitioner favoured dried locust as a healing agent, with bear's grease as a base for a wide variety of ointments. The jackal, too, is greatly prized. It is believed that he never sleeps—and sentries or watchmen eat his liver, and are thus sure to keep awake. Even the harmless, necessary cat is used in the preparation of medicines, and the saliva of foxes makes the best love potion.

Some of the entertainers are busy all day: others await the cool of the evening, and work half through the night. There were snake charmers and monkey trainers: negro dancers and troupes of Shleuh boy dancers—including the one I had seen at the pasha's palace. The comedians were especially popular, even if their jests were coarse. Singers, with accompaniment of drums and primitive stringed instruments, drew their crowds, and the conjurers were in great form: one man baffled me completely, with a trick in which water flowed at his command, and stopped when he so ordered.

Yet to me the most interesting performers were the story-tellers—who, after all, represent one of the antecedents of litera-

ture. Their audiences were large, squatting on the floor: their tales went on for hours, but interest never flagged, though the stories were as well known to them as that of Cinderella to us. I listened to one man, fascinated, as he told the familiar story of the Unfinished Slippers. A great pasha had a favourite wife, Lillah. But one day, in a fit of temper, he pronounced the fatal words, "I divorce thee!" Immediately he was smitten with contrition: yet what could he do? The Koranic law demanded that he could not re-marry his beloved Lillah until she had been the bride of another man.

While he brooded over his problem, furious with the world because of his own fault, he was disturbed by a constant hammering.

"Can I have no peace?" he cried in a rage. "Bring the man before me—and have the executioner sharpen his sword."

An unfortunate cobbler was dragged before the pasha.

"But I *must* hammer," the man explained. "I have an order for a pair of slippers for a lady of your harem. How can I make them without hammering?"

Then the pasha had his idea.

"You do not wish to die?"

"Of course not. I am young—I have not yet lived."

"Then listen. You will marry a lady of my court. Twenty-four hours later you will divorce her, and receive a bag of gold. It is understood?"

"It is."

"I have your promise?" A pasha may command, but he trusts an honest man's words rather than his own power.

"I will marry this lady, and will divorce her as soon as I have finished the slippers on which I now labour."

So Lillah was brought in, and married to the cobbler. But when he unveiled her, he was overcome by her beauty, and she by his young manliness. So the next day, when the pasha went round to the cobbler's booth, he found him working on a leather belt.

"You have finished the slippers?" he cried.

The cobbler turned to the wall: there hung a pair of slippers, unfinished. The pasha realized that they never would be finished. He went away in great sorrow, for he too was a man of his word.

This old legend, which reads in two minutes, occupied the story-teller and thrilled the audience for a good two hours. I was one of his admirers. He was an actor: I could not understand his words, but plainly his heart was in them.

When he finished, I talked with him. He told me that many of his audience believed the story—they were willing to believe it. This was a favourite tale, because it appeals to the sense of romance and justice.

"The financial reward is not great?" I said to him, as a boy collected small coins from the crowd.

"No, but there is great satisfaction in giving such pleasure. You do get something back."

IV

His attitude differed quite frankly from that of the other entertainers, who had not read the pamphlets denouncing the profit motive. The hat—or drum—was passed round monotonously. Any European was selected for special attention. When I produced a camera, the monkey trainer demanded a hundred francs, but compounded for ten: later I greatly regretted even this modest offering, for his performance reeked with cruelty.

The water-vendors also had an eye to their photogenic value. They were so ragged as to be half-naked, but wore broad-brimmed straw hats gay with bobbles: the water was contained in goat-skins on their backs, and their bells commanded attention—and scared away devils. Their professional fee was also a hundred francs a pose, but they seemed to overlook the fact that the goat-skin was their most interesting feature, so that the best photograph could be taken without their knowledge.

Every financial extravagance in Morocco is today blamed on the Americans—often unjustly: the legend that all Americans are rich dies hard. But in the afternoon I saw American tourists from a cruising liner at Casablanca paying 500 francs to a snake charmer for a thirty-second pose for a cine-picture. I had already had a tussle with one of these long-haired gentry—the hair seems to comply with their union regulations. Probably sensing my intense dislike, or fear, of snakes, he put one of his serpents

round my neck and demanded a hundred francs to remove it. I was indeed scared, but tried not to show it before the crowd of grinning Moroccans. Instead of submitting to his blackmail, I demanded two hundred francs *from* him, as a fee for my part of the entertainment. This attracted the sympathy of the crowd: then the snake, evidently anxious about the unusually long vigil about a stranger's neck, began to straighten himself out. So I was able to seize him in a favourable place behind the head, and flung him at his master. This gentleman reiterated his financial demands, but I told him exactly where he could go, taking his miserable snakes with him. The name of the square means the Concourse of Sinners, and in older days the heads of criminals were exhibited there. I only went so far as to suggest that his long hair would facilitate such an exhibition.

This neo-financial aspect of the Djemaa el Fna is beginning to spoil the place, which is a pity.[1] Yet, even when the entertainers lose their charm by cupidity, no one could rob the crowd of its fascination. The roadway is an amazing medley of cars, bicycles, camels and donkeys. On the square itself can be found the local townsman, maybe accompanied by his veiled wife. But most of the spectators are countrymen, from a dozen tribes near and far. There are Shleuhs from the mountain regions, Berbers from beyond the Atlas, Mauretanians—easily distinguished by their fuzzy black hair—from the Sous, and others in such a variety as to delight an ethnic student. The Shleuhs, by the way, are themselves Berbers, of the Masmouda tribe.

These visiting peasants certainly make the most of their time. They have spent days, not hours, in tramping or riding into town. They get their business done in the morning, then settle down to non-stop entertainment for the next ten or twelve hours. After patronizing eating houses, they wander off to the prostitutes' quarters—where, I was informed on good authority, European as well as Moroccan girls are available if the price is right—and begin to drift home in the early hours of the morning. On the way they have time to think out a good story to tell

[1] Another racket has recently fouled the square. Touts appear beside European tourists and offer to take them to places where Shleuh boys dance naked. This 'exhibition' has no local tradition—on the contrary—and is expressly designed for the 'entertainment' of tourists. I understand that it is very boring and remarkably expensive.

the wife—to explain that the sheep or grain fetched a very bad price; hence the small sum brought home.

I was at last enticed away from the square by an old friend. D. Dem. Dimancescu is a Roumanian diplomat who can tell a behind-the-scenes story of high politics which platitudinous statesmen might not like to hear. Now that his country is apparently abandoned by the West, Dimancescu has settled with his wife and family in Marrakesh—in an Arab house inside the *medina*. It was good to see a library again—he had of course lost his magnificent collection of books in Roumania, but had begun again. Now, with him as guide, I sallied forth to see some of the sights of Marrakesh.

I had already seen the most famous of all—the Koutoubia, the magnificent tower built as a minaret to a mosque by the Sultan Yakoub el Mansour. He planned three, but that at Rabat was never finished, and the Giralda at Seville was marred by later additions. The Koutoubia remains the masterpiece of its kind, solid yet delicate in its warm decorated stone. It dominates the scene from afar, but I had gazed on it from the best possible viewpoint—General d'Hauteville's garden. Its architect and builders were Christian slaves!

Many tourists are frightened by the word 'museum', and so miss the Museum of Moroccan Arts and Crafts. This is their loss. Not only are the exhibits fascinating, but they are exhibited in a fine Arab house, which alone would repay a visit.

The Bahia palace, however, is seldom omitted from any itinerary. It is comparatively modern—less than a hundred years old, and was built for the Sultan's Vizier in Marrakesh. The entrance is unpretentious: it is hidden in a maze of narrow streets—easy to defend! Further, the gate is ordinary—no looting tribesmen from the rural districts would ever guess at the riches which lay behind. The halls are brilliantly decorated, the roofs being especially colourful. Their pattern is one originally introduced by Christian slaves, who were usually sailors: their way of making a roof resembled a ship upside down. The size of the halls was determined, not by architects' plans, but by the lengths of the cedar logs available. It is doubtful if there *were* any architects' plans: the palace seems to have grown higgledy-piggledy, bits and pieces being added in most unlikely places.

The Court of the Harem was pleasant. The Vizier who built

the palace enjoyed his feudal rights, and owned more than 250 women. As they filed past him, he would drop a handkerchief as some maiden attracted his attention. She would become 'favourite', and lounge in a special luxury chamber, until the Vizier called for his handkerchief again.

One aspect of the harem decorations puzzled me: mingled with the traditional Arab patterns, I saw shadowy figures of dragons appearing through the paint. The explanation was that the court had been used by a Hollywood company for scenes for a film called 'The Black Robe'. As this was a Chinese story, they needed dragons: they were given permission to paint in some dragons on condition that later they painted them out. This was done, but the green paint used to restore the original background must have been inferior: it has weathered badly, and now fierce dragons scowl at the scene where lovely ladies competed for the favour of the Vizier's handkerchief.

V

The oasis of Marrakesh is extensive. Its 'gardens' are famous —they are not all flower gardens, for the term includes orchards. Especially famous are those of Aguedal, with two reservoirs, and Menara, with one. This latter, if legend can be credited, has a tragic history. One sultan, after he had taken his pleasure of the woman of the night, had her thrown next morning into the pool, so that none other should ever share his delight.

"What a waste!" was Mohammed's comment. "And with women so expensive!"

The sultans were a queer lot. One habit most of them shared —a praiseworthy desire to erect beautiful buildings: unfortunately, concurrently with this ran a passion for destroying the work of previous dynasties. When Moulay Ismail became Sultan, one of his first acts was accordingly to destroy the edifices of the Saadian rulers. The great Badi palace was among them—by current accounts amazingly beautiful.

Nor need the old records be discounted. For some reason, Moulay Ismail was content merely to close up the sepulchres of his predecessors. The rubble of the centuries accumulated: the very site was forgotten. Then archæologists in 1917 followed a

hint from ancient documents: hundreds of tons of rubble were removed, and the royal Saadian necropolis revealed in all its splendour—an admirable monument to the artistic standards of its period.

We wandered through the *souks* to Dimancescu's unconventional home: then out again to see the ancient walls at the rapid sunset, when in a matter of minutes the colour of the walls darkens from its red-brown to deep coral and then to purple. Few cities in the world so live up to their reputation as Marrakesh: even the extortions of the performers in the square are easily forgotten in the peace of the evening and in the mellow beauty of the surroundings.

"And now I'd like to talk to some Nationalists," I suggested.

"You won't find very many here," said Dimancescu. "The Pasha doesn't like them. And, anyway, who could get really excited over politics in a place like this?"

Maybe that is why Mr. Churchill is so fond of Marrakesh: as a place of escape from politics!

CHAPTER FIVE

OASIS BEYOND ATLAS

I

MARRAKESH was as lovely in the early morning light as in the sunset glow. The red hues of the walls and minarets were enhanced by the brilliant bougainvillea and the amazing heliotrope of the jacaranda trees in the boulevards. Peasants on donkeys or camels were already on the move towards the city.

The great oasis ended abruptly, to give place to brown arid plain—not a desert, for if it could be irrigated it would yield fair crops. I am admittedly an amateur in such things, but I felt that ground so near the mountains should not be neglected. The French have done so many ingenious things in Morocco that it was difficult to credit that they could not divert mountain water to a place where soil and sun awaited its beneficence.

As we approached the vast wall of the Atlas, the foothills displayed green valleys: forests of oak followed before the soil became shallow. The slopes of the mountains carried only the thinnest scrub. They were not spectacular: the Atlas consists of long high ridges rather than dramatic peaks: only occasionally did rocks burst through the coating of red-brown earth.

The infrequent villages were built of the soil rammed into shape, and appeared to grow from their scene. The houses were poorly constructed, single-storey, with flat roof, suggestive of lands further East.

The road made a hundred twists and turns as it mounted to the pass of Tizi n'Tichka, 7,380 feet. The road is often three to four feet deep in snow in winter, but a snow-plough keeps it clear, for it is a vital communication with the extreme south. No railway is possible, but the company arranges lorry convoys two or three times a day—periodic notice boards announce the

times of their passing, and if you meet one it is as well to pull into the side and let it pass. The convoys are a survival of the days when they were organized for reasons of security. Not that they monopolize the traffic of the region. The donkey is ubiquitous—and near the pass I saw camels on the snow-line!

The near mountains were still plentifully flecked with snow, and the wind was sharp and cool. The descent was easier, but the southern aspect of the slopes had rendered the mountains barren. Only deep in the valley, bordering the stream, were strips of brilliant green—tiny fields, terraced as far up the slopes as the water could be tempted to flow.

I stopped to talk with peasants at work. The Berbers favour brighter costumes than do their Arabicized brothers, and their blue and yellow gowns were a startling contrast to the more sober hues of the north. The women worked unveiled—a veil would be an intolerable nuisance on a farm. They appeared to do more than their fair share of work, and staggered back to the village encumbered by apparently impossible loads. Yet the greatest puzzle was where they found the wood, for there was hardly a tree in sight.

Now the valley widened, with a desert of stones bordering its green ribbon. This is a land where man cannot leave a river or well and survive.

The road had been excellent—finely engineered and well-surfaced. But after Ouarzazate it degenerated, its surface being only roughly metalled. For a while a thin ribbon of palms traced the course of the stream: then the road plunged boldly across the stony land: it was not real desert, but a vast stretch of hard ground, baked by centuries of sun.

I proposed to hasten to my furthest point and then make a leisurely return. Certainly the country impelled speed, for its monotonous desolation was uninviting; for once I made no complaint as Mohammed gave the car its head. This is no region for night driving, and I was glad to see the oasis of Tinerhir before the sun attained his rapid setting—the twilight is brief indeed. The oasis was a lovely sight, dotted with thousands of palms, and with fields of an incredibly bright green. Beyond were ranges of hills and stretches of arid brown earth. This was the edge of the Sahara—which does not consist entirely of sand.

This land could be retrieved if water could be brought to it. For the casual traveller it has another advantage over sand—it does not blow over the roads.

There were lovely tints everywhere in the hour before sunset, from golden sand to a deep Devon red. The villages were camouflaged against their background—they were built over the edge of the oasis, so as not to use up cultivable land. Bull-frogs chanted in the tiny irrigation canals: their voices were powerful if not musical, and could be heard a mile away.

I was staying at the Gite d'Étape. In the desert area there are no hotels proper, but the Moroccan railways have built what are modestly described as 'Staging Posts' at about hundred-mile intervals. They are simple but quite comfortable—and, naturally, comparatively expensive, since everything has to be carried such long distances.

After dinner I walked out into the oasis. The darkness was complete: there was no sign of life, till I saw a faint light across an open space. I followed the gleam, to find myself in a small shop, its owner betraying his race by the round black hat and black robe which he wore. The Jews are the traders of most Moroccan villages.

"And why not?" this man enquired, with a suggestion of a smile. "We are part of rural life. These people are not provident, you know. They never have anything in hand. They live against the coming of their harvest—someone has to sustain them until it is gathered. That is our task."

"You are many?"

"We are a community," he said.

"Your relations with the Berbers are good?"

"Very good. It is understood, we do not mingle in our daily lives, save in trade. There is no inter-marriage between us. But we are good friends. After all, we are not modern interlopers. We have been here since the Diaspora—we were here *before* the Berbers."

"And your language?"

"Hebrew—the old Hebrew. We speak the local tongue as well, naturally: and French—we are much keener on schools than the Berbers, and make our own. But Hebrew is our native tongue."

"Tell me this: as I arrived, I saw villages on every hand——"

"Yes, there are more than sixty in the oasis."

"Yet now I see no other light than yours."

"No."

"Does that mean that the Berbers go to bed at sunset?"

"Oh, no, they have lamps, and candles. But you do not see them. The exterior walls of their houses have no windows. Or, perhaps I should say, they *had* no windows. Now they are beginning. You will see tomorrow. And you will realize that the point is important. As you examine our villages, look at the windows."

II

The region south of the Atlas was the last to be 'pacified' —the fighting continued until 1934—and it is still under a form of military government. In practice, the system is the same on both sides of the mountains, but in the north the French officials are civilians, while in the south they are soldiers. It was not my first acquaintance with the *Officiers des Affaires Indigènes.*

I called on the Commandant early, and was warmly received. Hospitality in outlying stations is an old and universal tradition: when only a dozen Frenchmen occupy a post, they can easily get tired of each other's faces, and a stranger is doubly welcome.

Any suggestion of a military occupation was immediately dispelled. The 'garrison' consisted of two French officers, their army a couple of dozen local police—not in uniform, and armed with carbines: they were approximately equivalent to the French rural *gardes champêtres.*

I learned that the population of the oasis was 25,000, plus 5,000 in outlying villages. This suggested some crowding of resources, for the green patch was not more than twenty miles long and never three miles wide.

"True," said the Commandant. "The oasis could only support its population for eight months of the year. However, it is a tradition here that the men should go abroad to work for part of the year."

"They are allowed to go?"

"Of course. Why do you ask that?"

"Before I left England I received a copy of what I presumed to be a Nationalist pamphlet. It suggested that there is no freedom of travel in Morocco—that it is almost impossible for a man to go abroad."[1]

"Then it lies. Of the 5,000 men in this oasis, about 3,500 are abroad at this moment, mostly in Algeria. You can check that for yourself."

I did. I try to check every statement, however official. The Commandant was quite right. Many workers emigrate to Algeria for six months of the year. There they work for French colonists: they have a great reputation as diggers of wells.

"They have to get special permits?" I asked.

"No. They have the same rights as the frontier tribes—that is, they can cross into Algeria and back at will. And now, what would you like to do?"

"See things, and people—especially people."

"Good. Suppose you go off by yourself for a couple of hours, while I clear my table. Then I will take you round."

I went first towards the tourist attraction, the Gorges of the Todra. The oasis was sheer loveliness, its green so restful compared with the bare rocks of the enclosing hills. Small boys scampered up the palm trees with an agility which monkeys might have envied, their bare toes finding a hold on the rough rings of the trees. Nor were the men less agile. Too much cannot be left to Nature. The pollen from the male tree *might* blow in the right direction and fertilize the female, thus producing dates: but a desert tribe cannot depend on the wind. Thus men climb up the female trees with the male pollen. "We marry them," they said.

Another man was splitting a dead palm for firewood. His wedge was a piece of harder wood, his hammer a large stone. In an outlying region you improvise what you cannot make.

Water flowed in profusion, directed by a careful system of irrigation. One pool bore a label, *Source des poissons sacrés.* Sure enough, fish of nice size were swimming in the pool. But

[1] I shall refer to this pamphlet more than once. It is called 'Some guiding facts on the problem of Morocco', and claims to have been 'Prepared by a Group of Independent Students of Moroccan Affairs', but does little more than present Istiqlal accusations. It was forwarded to me by Mr. Fenner Brockway, M.P., Chairman of the Congress of Peoples against Imperialism.

the local men shook their heads when I asked why the fish were sacred. I suspect a subterfuge. This must be the only fishing for a hundred miles. How better could some Izaak Walton reserve it to himself than by dubbing the fish sacred?

A man at the top of a palm tree was lopping off branches for use as fodder and fuel. The universal implement for almost all purposes was a cross between a sickle and a hammer, with an eighteen-inch handle. It proved to be remarkably practical.

I moved on by a rough road, rising against the descending stream. The mountains crowded together: the road passed through a dramatic ravine. Now road and river ceased simultaneously, but the bed of stones suggested a winter river of some size. Mohammed was sure that his car could tackle the river bed, so we plunged onwards. Now the gorge was bleak and wild. The irrigated area had ceased abruptly with the stream—it was but a step from green crops to stony desert.

The valley narrowed still further, till it became but a narrow chasm between virtual rocks a thousand feet sheer. The gorge was savage, almost frightening. I was surprised to meet women carrying firewood; then a peasant with a laden donkey.

"Can a man live here?" I asked.

"Oh, yes. At the time of the rains there is plenty of water—too much. We plant and snatch a crop when we can. Then we have our goats."

"But what can they eat?" I surveyed the wilderness about me.

"Did you ever know a goat starve? I do not say that they eat rocks, but almost anything else will do. I admit, sometimes we have to drive them far to find sustenance."

I was glad to return towards the friendly green of the oasis. The road skirted its near neighbour, the desert. Just before Tinerhir I halted by a Moslem cemetery. It was simple enough. Two stones, marking the direction of Mecca, stood at the head and foot of each grave: ordinary stones, not carved. Recent graves were fringed with larger boulders.

"Why?" I asked Mohammed. But he did not know—he was a townsman of the north, and had never been in this part of his country.

A man approached the boulders with a strip of palm leaves, so I put my question to him. An expressive hand pointed among

the wilderness of rocks: in the near distance I saw two jackals—very like grey dogs, smaller than the Central African variety. Now I understood. The jackals would dig up bodies not adequately protected by stones.

I approached one of the villages: it was a *ksar*, or fortified community. Each village contains a tribe, a fraction of a tribe, or one large family. In older days strife was frequent, almost universal. Raids by other tribes, especially of nomads, were part of the accepted order. Each village therefore looked to its own defence.

Generally the outer wall was ten to fifteen feet high, crenellated, and with loopholes for weapons. The universal building material was the local earth, mixed with water into a very thick mud, and rammed into shape like concrete—but without cement. Towers at each corner, and over the gateway, provided additional defences.

A street ran round the village just inside the walls, thus enabling reinforcements to reach a threatened point quickly. Within its square were a huddle of houses, linked by narrow alleys. Some consisted of a single storey: others of two: in their simplicity both resembled a child's house of cards.

The Commandant now awaited me, with his assistant, a Captain. First we visited a village school, where a gallant Frenchman and his wife laboured with remarkable success. Imagine the difficulty—to be confronted by a class of thirty Berber boys of all ages, who do not know a word of French. The beginning is elementary: the master points to things and gives their names. At least he has one advantage: like most peasant peoples, the Berbers have phenomenal memories, and anything which can be learned by rote comes easily to them. Within six months they read, write and do elementary problems in simple arithmetic —all in a foreign language.

To date the oasis has six schools, giving place to about 20 per cent of the boys. So far the girls have no schools.

"You understand the difficulties, in a Moslem country?" said the teacher. "But the outlook is changing. Only a few years ago we could not get the boys to come—now there is a scramble for places. So it will be with the girls. Our principal difficulties are teachers—as you see, our buildings and equipment are simple enough. I have five Moroccan assistants in my branch schools.

: could employ many more, if they were available. And where ım I to get *women* Moroccan teachers for the girls?"

I could not tell him, but undertook to discuss the problem ater. I could only marvel at the results he had obtained with so little. Picture the scene: an oasis in a stony desert: a primitive Berber people, fighting against the French until 1934, and previously engaged in continuous internecine strife. And now the boys clamour to go to school! This is revolution of the most pleasant and durable type.

The Commandant was proud of his schools, but the Captain's special interest was in irrigation. We passed by a native system, primitive enough, and not very effective. Then a jeep awaited us, as the path ahead was too rough for a car. Later I noticed ponies, in case even the hardy jeep were halted: no doubt camels were also posted at a suitable point, for the local organization was obviously thorough.

A new dam had been built across the valley—a modest effort as such things go, but planned locally. It irrigated 400 hectares of new ground, and I saw the first crops of grain awaiting the sickles of the reapers. The area was organized as a communal farm—it would have been unfair to have allocated rich new farmland to selected individuals.

This was only the beginning. Underground tunnels had been dug through the water-bearing strata, bringing supplies to the surface at convenient points. Then at another spot—well beyond the oasis, in land which might have been dismissed as desert—the Captain had discovered water at a depth of only twenty-five feet. He had begged, borrowed or otherwise acquired a small motor, which pumped up enough for ten hectares of land.

Both this and part of the larger area were used for experimental purposes. It would have been easier, and tempting to the souls of all but pioneers, to have planted more palms. Instead, a dozen kinds of corn had been sown, with a wide variety of vegetables and fruit trees. Failures would be eliminated, successes followed up.

This was real practical effort, far removed from the aloof calculations of theoretical 'planners' in city offices. These two men had a sense of mission—it was noticeable among all their kind—and I could appreciate the thrill of their enthusiasm.

"Mr. Churchill liked this," said the Captain. "He has been

twice to Tinerhir, you know. See, there is the *ksar* he loved to paint."

I do not think that his eye had misled him. Any of these villages, with their walls and houses in warm red tones, must have appealed to the artist.

"Yes, he loved the colours. But he was very interested in our little irrigation. One thing I did not understand. He talked about a cook. What did he mean?"

"A cook?"

"Yes—or so I understood it, though my English is as weak as his French. Or would it be a man named Cook? I couldn't see any connection with a cuisine——"

"I've got it! Coke, pronounced Cook, or very nearly. Thomas Coke, I think. He was an English agriculturist, and his speciality was the reclamation of derelict land. I believe that he proclaimed that his ambition was to make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before. Between wars men laughed at his idea as folly, and even destroyed the extra blade to keep up the price of the original. Yet maybe he was right, after all."

"He was right here, anyway," said the Captain. "Where can I learn more of this Coke?"

"Alas, you will have to look in the old histories. He lived a hundred years ago, or thereabouts. Modern theories ignore him. More factories, more bombs, more television sets—apparently that is progress. But more blades of grass—that is retrograde!"

"I always said that the world was mad!"

III

"There is one aspect of our locality which I would like you to see by yourself," said the Commandant. "We can discuss it afterwards, if you wish, but I don't want to suggest ideas to you. Two years ago some of our villages were overwhelmed by floods —yes, floods, on the edge of the desert! They are being rebuilt on higher ground, over there. Will you go?"

I needed no prompting. Instead of being concentrated behind the walls of a *ksar*, the houses were built individually, out in the open.

The method of construction had not changed. A family needing a new house requires a mason to direct operations, and a carpenter to make the door: they themselves provide the rest of the labour—need I add, the women as well as the men. The universal material is local earth, mixed with a very small quantity of water and straw. Boards are fixed vertically as moulds about eighteen inches apart, and the earth is poured between them and rammed down hard. Without cement, the walls tend to weather, but they are claimed to last from fifty to a hundred years—much more if well maintained.

Houses in different stages of construction afforded an opportunity of examining the different styles—on the slightest display of interest I was invited in, and within a few minutes mint tea was produced. At first the house consists of a single storey. There is a court for the animals, usually covered: opposite will be two or three rooms, the whole enclosed within the outer wall with but a single door. The simple plan makes expansion easy. When a man gets ambitious, he adds a second floor to the living rooms: then, maybe, a third. Finally—or often, before a third floor—he builds a tower. The Berber loves towers. If he can add two or three towers his house is like a *kasbah*, a castle.

The rooms are simple. The Berbers sleep on the ground, on rush mats or carpets, with rough coloured blankets or sheepskins for covering. The kitchen would be dismissed as primitive. It has a minimum of utensils—a few bowls, and an earthenware charcoal stove on which most of the cooking is done. Outside there may be a simple oven: the Berber woman bakes her own bread. She often makes her own flour. If there is a watermill handy, the man will take his corn to be ground, paying in kind for the work. Otherwise the women of his family turn the upper grindstone by hand. The Berber prefers to prepare his own food in all stages rather than to buy tins and packets from shops. This habit descends from days when shops were far away. Even now hundreds of thousands of people only see tins and packets once a week, when they journey for miles to the local *souk*.

In one courtyard a well was being dug. A man stood by a rope which ran over a crude pulley. At a muffled sound from below he began to pull, his powerful biceps expanded. After an unconscionable period of hauling a basket appeared. He

grabbed it, and cried aloud in joy. Among its contents were several pieces of damp earth. Water was near!

"How deep down is your friend?"

"Fairly deep. We have to dig deeply here to get to the water, since we are on high ground. We can measure the rope, if you like."

We measured it. Forty metres beneath us a man was hacking at the ground in a space of three feet across.

I sat in one house which had progressed to the second floor: its owner was already considering a tower. He had a small guest room, with mattresses and cushions. The room had windows, which reminded me.

"Last night I talked with one of your Jews," I said. "He told me to look at windows—what did he mean?"

"Ah! Come!" He led the way on to the flat roof. "You see the next *ksar*? The houses have no windows—only a few holes for defence. The rooms get all their light from the courtyard. But look—I have real windows in my house, in the walls. And so have the other houses near. Why, look at the old *ksar* —you see those squares of white? That is where people have knocked windows through their walls. The Jew was right. You see what it means?"

"Security!"

"Yes. I am an old soldier—I was in the Goums. But I needed little training for fighting. Before the French came we were always fighting, tribe against tribe. Nomads raided us from the mountains. Other *ksars* envied us, and sought to destroy us. Any trifle might lead to a conflict, with dead and wounded. So our *ksars* were built not for convenience but for defence. Our houses had holes for shooting, but we dare not have windows."

"I begin to see."

"Yes. At that time fighting seemed to be the natural way of life, but now I see that that is wrong. I am happy that we have peace. My children can grow up to live—all of them. I can do my work without a gun in my hand. I have no fear—is not that a blessing? Yes, there is a peace which this oasis has never known. Now I can build my tower. Already I have windows."

IV

Mohammed stared at me in amazement when I told him that I proposed to try a cross-country journey. Map reading was obviously a major mystery to him—his method of finding the way was to shout at a man on a donkey afar off, and he was always impressed when I told him that we should turn to the left ten kilometres ahead.

Now I borrowed a compass from the Commandant. Mohammed handled it with awe.

"But how does the thing know which way to point?" he demanded.

An explanation of the action of the compass might have been within the bounds of my French, but not within his. Eventually I had to keep the compass out of his sight—he wanted always to follow the needle pointing. As this pointed north and I wanted to go south, I had to be firm.

South of Tinerhir stretches the range of mountains known as the Djebel Sarro. They did not look inviting, but they mark the edge of the Sahara. Save for a very occasional oasis, the map suggested nought beyond but desolation.

At first a track of beaten earth offered a reasonable road. Then I selected a cross-country route. The ground was as hard as concrete, and fairly level: the only difficulty was the wilderness of stones. I left the tactical details of avoiding these to Mohammed, concentrating on strategic issues.

I was making for a valley whose distant prospect suggested fairly easy access. Mohammed was unhappy: bumping along at ten miles an hour was not his idea of motoring.

"We should strike an empty river course in another two kilometres," I said. When we did, his wonderment increased.

Yet the time came when even the gallant Citroen could go no further. I told Mohammed to wait—I proposed to climb to the pass ahead.

"But how will you find your way back?" he asked.

"The compass will help me."

He shook his head in sheer bewilderment at this magic. Yet his great-grandfather had probably ridden a camel across the

Sahara by the aid of the stars. Urban life is a great thief of knowledge.

The climb was not steep, but the loose stones made it difficult. At a turn in the valley I saw sheep and goats above me: then heard shouts. These proved advantageous, since the shepherd was calling off his dogs—who, naturally enough, regarded me as an unlicensed intruder.

I climbed up to meet their master, who extended a friendly hand. My knowledge of Berber consisting of about twenty words, our conversation was limited. I would have liked another expert opinion on how even his hardy sheep and goats managed to get a living. As I was about to move on, however, I saw another man approaching, on a donkey. He seemed to be going my way, and with true local hospitality offered me his seat on the donkey. The unfortunate beast already carried wicker panniers on either side, but it would have been rude to decline. I rode in the local fashion, side-saddle—save that there was of course no saddle: for that matter, there was no bridle either. I do not pretend that my riding was elegant. A large man sitting sideways on a small donkey is not at his best, especially when he nearly falls off backwards every twenty yards. I thought my readers deserved a photograph, but the mere sight of a camera frightened my new friend, so I did not persist.

To my surprise, I found a small camp in a hollow of the mountainside—half a dozen tents, or rather black canvas expanses spread haphazard from boulder to boulder. My arrival was a sensation. Women left their baking, and the children gathered round. There was some animated conversation, and a boy was despatched over the mountain crest.

It was assumed without question that I would share the meal —a piece of boiled goat. Afterwards the boy returned, accompanied by a man of dignified appearance. To my delight, he had a little French.

It appeared that he was the headman of a semi-nomadic tribe. They had their mud *ksar* down on the plain, but unfortunately had no access to the oasis, so could not raise crops. Thus they wandered wherever their herds could find sustenance, returning to the village for the brief rainy season.

He walked with me up to the pass. The view was blocked, so we pressed on.

"Yes, there is the great desert before you," he said as we stood on a rocky eminence. "Here it is hard ground, and stones. Later it is sand—you see the lighter shade of brown on the flanks of the distant hills. That is sand."

"It is not much better here! "

"No, but if the rains are good the ground holds water, and we can sustain our flocks."

"And if the rains fail? "

"The will of Allah must be accepted, but it is hard. Seven years ago—you have probably heard of our disasters then? "

In 1945 the harvests were less than poor—they scarcely existed. Thousands of people died of famine. The number would have run to hundreds of thousands, but the French approached the problem with energy, and sacrificed part of their last gold reserves to buy food from America.

Later I discussed the famine year and its effects on livestock with a French expert.

"You know, of course, that Morocco is primarily and overwhelmingly an agricultural country. Livestock farming is a vital part of its economy—it always has been.

"When we took over from 1912 onwards, the situation was bad. The constant tribal warfare depleted the herds—which were the first objective of looters. The primitive conditions did even more damage—herds were devastated by parasitic diseases—periodic epizootic epidemics swept the country.

"So, first, the restoration of peace had excellent effects. A man knew that his cattle were safe from plundering neighbours. We have begun on the second problem. There are constant veterinary inspections. We have trained Moroccans as assistants to our officers. Our animal vaccinations average two and a half millions a year—treatments against parasites over six million. We have established centres for selective breeding, which are doing well. We construct shelters to protect cattle against cold and heat: sometimes small spinneys, sometimes 'Australian walls', sometimes large sheds. We have established hundreds of new watering points.

"Yet hunger remains a problem. Every year more land is fitted for intensive farming: this means so much less for grazing. So we have to increase the yield of available pasture land. We have in hand a vast programme for growing fodder, planting

drought-resisting fodder crops, and the like. Results are necessarily slow, but are certain.

"Yet to return to your enquiry—the famine years of 1944 and 1945. They were appalling. Nearly 60 per cent of all Moroccan livestock died. We could keep most of the peasants alive, but could do little or nothing for their cattle. Even now we have not recovered the fairly prosperous state we had attained before this catastrophe. You might like to study these figures."

	1935	1938	1943	1946	1950
Cattle	1,800,000	1,900,000	2,500,000	1,324,000	1,980,000
Sheep	7,750,000	10,000,000	13,000,000	7,423,000	10,350,000
Goats	3,800,000	5,800,000	8,000,000	5,342,000	7,350,000
Horses and Mules	289,000	355,000	392,000	291,000	329,000

"You see the implications?" he went on. "By careful work we had brought the Moroccan livestock population up to record figures in 1943. Then came the disastrous droughts—in effect we had to begin again. Yet give us another few years, and we will be back where we were."

"Unless you have another drought."

"True. But even that would not hit us quite so badly now. And there is such a demand for meat abroad that we could slaughter and sell—that is better than leaving the animals to die. Then we could replenish later."

My friend on the Sarro Mountains knew little of vaccinations and soil erosion, but impulsively he brought out the first point, echoing the ideas of the villager the previous evening.

"I led my tribe against the French in 1933," he said. "In fact, I led a group of tribes—for once we were united. Of course we fought against the French—we would have fought against any invader—we are independent people in these mountains. They were infidels, too. And, it is understood, the French came as representatives of the Sultan, and we did not want his yoke forced upon us—he had never owned our suzerainty—his word meant nothing in these parts.

"So we fought like men, and so did the French. When they won, they behaved like men. I never thought to see this day, but now I glory in it. Here am I, a Berber leader against the invaders, yet now I am for all purposes the representative of

the French Protectorate. I remain a Berber, it is understood, but the French have given us a peace which we were never able to secure by ourselves.

"You see those little isolated hills bordering the oasis? Each one is crowned by a tower, is it not? A watch tower, where a perpetual vigil was kept for dozens of generations against armed raiders. Climb those hills now, and look at the towers. They are deserted and crumbling. They are no longer needed."

CHAPTER SIX

ZONE OF INSECURITY?

I

I HAD noticed that on some maps the southern regions were marked as *zones d'insecurité*. I had imagined that such maps were old, dating from the days of the progressive 'pacification'. Now it transpired that I had been in a zone of insecurity for three days without knowing it.

I asked what it all meant, but the only definite answer was that the local offices south of the Atlas were staffed by military officers, those to the north by civilians. There was some hazy idea about restricted travel in the area, but no one was quite sure what it involved.

The question was worth pursuing, however, for one sentence in the Nationalist pamphlet declared: "The native is treated in his own country as a foreigner. . . . In many areas within French Morocco itself he cannot travel without a special military permit."

If this statement were true, no one had mentioned it, and certainly no one asked for my special military permit. Nor had Mohammed ever heard of the regulation. Later in the day I managed to put the question to about half the passengers on the bus from Marrakesh—all but two of them Moroccans—and none of them had military permits, either.

Apparently the regulation did originally date from 'pacification' days. Just because a tribe submitted, it could not be inferred that the region was safe—there might be odd tribesmen who would not follow their leader's decision. Travel was therefore restricted. Gradually, as the pacification lived up to its name and became something different from a mere military operation, supervision became lax—though the regulation remained in force. Then, a few years ago, there was an outbreak of banditry in some mountain areas: it had nothing

to do with nationalism. On one unhappy occasion a party of eight innocent anglers were killed and robbed. Accordingly the regulation was re-enforced.

The landlord of the hotel was not quite sure of the present position, and I had left it too late in the day to make official enquiries. One idea was obvious—to test the insecurity of the zone. The Gite d'Étape stood on an eminence, and had windows —it would serve as a lighthouse to guide my return. An hour after dinner I set off on foot along any street or path which suggested itself.

The starlight, as so often in desert country, was incredibly brilliant. The first village was dark, but an irregular chorus of dog barks greeted me from the flat housetops. Not until I was clear of the narrow streets did I meet a human being. Then I heard the padding of a donkey behind me, and halted. The rider called a greeting, then stopped the donkey so that we could shake hands. This was the only incident on a three-hour walk, until the dogs resumed their protest on my return.

The following morning I made my way to the local officer of Native Affairs.

"You had your trouble for nothing," he smiled. "The Zones of Insecurity were abolished over a year ago!"

The editors of the pamphlet can be exonerated, for it was probably printed while the order was in force. But there was one feature which did not appeal to me. "In many parts of French Morocco itself he (the native) cannot travel without a special military permit." This was true until 1951—but the regulation was not directed against Moroccans—it applied to Europeans as well. One friend—not a Frenchman—later described the procedure to me.

"It was quite easy to get a permit if you had a real reason for travel," he said. "The restriction was in your own interests. Some years elapsed before the southern regions were really settled. The first objective of the French was adequate communications—roads and telephones. So, on my first journey, a native guard stopped me and asked my name and destination. This he telephoned ahead, and if I did not arrive at my journey's end within a reasonable time, a patrol was sent out to look for me.

"Oh, all that sort of thing is quite unnecessary now. I never bothered to get a pass two or three years before the regulation was formally abolished."

The mystery of the Zones of Insecurity appeared to be solved: they no longer existed. But for weeks afterwards Nationalist leaders in the northern cities were assuring me that Moroccans had to get permits to cross the Atlas. I do not suggest that they deliberately attempted to mislead me, but if they really believed that the regulation was still in force, their contact with local reality cannot be so close as it should be.

II

The road west from Tinerhir plodded over a desert region with only an occasional and hesitant oasis. Nearing Boumalne, however, there were signs of activity—peasants, donkeys and camels pouring into the little town from all directions. It was the day of the *souk*, the weekly market. A small town will hold this in an open field, a larger one in an enclosed open space, with alcoves for the more pretentious dealers.

I can always be happy in a country market, and this was fascinating. Peasant women squatted by little piles of grain, firewood, or berries. The shopkeepers spread their wares on the floor: every bargain was lengthy, even ordinary purchases of sugar, mint, cloth or earthenware, or the repairing of shoes. The cattle market was lively. There were donkeys by the hundred and camels by the dozen. One Jewish merchant got it into his head that I wanted to buy a camel. I found the local Jews very useful as interpreters: they accepted such educational opportunities as were available long before the Berbers did, or created their own, and most of them spoke some French. The dignified Abraham, however, must have misjudged my interest: at last convincing him that I had no use or place for a camel, I bought a small piece of pottery from him instead.

The *souk* is the weekly event. Even if the peasant has nothing to sell or buy, he would not miss it. Here is his social club, with a flow of gossip which outpaces women's chatter. There were even a few mild entertainments by strolling players.

At Boumalne the road joined the valley of the Dades. First we turned northwards to see its gorges—not so stark as those of the Todra, but more fascinating in their variety. The neighbouring mountains have weathered into fantastic shapes, and the maze of colour is astonishing. The general background of the mountains is grey-green, but their sides are slashed with brown, chocolate, purple and violet. No two are alike, and every twist of the rough road revealed a vista more startling than the last. By contrast, the banks of the stream itself are lined with little fields bearing crops of a brilliant green. This is surely a painter's paradise: his trouble would be to make people believe that the extraordinary vivid green was real.

The people fitted the scene—the women, especially. They favoured robes of bright blue, with as much jewellery as they could carry—massive amber necklaces, silver bracelets and ornaments worn on the brow—and a mountain rose over each ear. Their fingernails were stained red—some had even applied a red tint to their dusky cheeks, with incongruous effects. All carried their tribal marks tattooed on their faces, and the proudest showed the black lines which indicated that they were mothers of sons. Berber girls are often very attractive when young, but they age too rapidly.

Away from the river-banks the scene was one of utter desolation and savage grandeur. Villages, of local earth, fitted into the background whatever its shade. The Gorges of the Dades would well repay a lengthy exploration.

For a while our road followed the less scenic stretch of the river below Boumalne. Nevertheless, it was fascinating because of the long line of *ksars* which followed the thin green ribbon beside the stream. Some squatted on hillsides: others were proudly planted on rocks left high by weathering soil flanks. All were of the same type—the enclosing walls, the gate—always decorated, however crudely—the huddle of houses, some aspiring to towers. Inside the gate was a chamber for the guard. The gate is still closed at night, and the guard sleeps at hand, but he is no longer armed—again the occasional windows suggested that such precautions are no longer necessary.

There was a busier *souk* at El Kelaa des Mgouna. Business appeared to be brisker: peasants, after haggling for an hour

over the sale of a sheep or goat, would then bargain as leisurely over the purchase of household essentials, or a pair of slippers, or a new tool, roughly fashioned by a blacksmith, or silks and jewellery for their wives. Barbers were busy with their blood-letting: the bells of the water-carriers were shrill and insistent. I noticed that they were paid in kind. A man would hand a cup of water to a peasant woman, and she would pull a small wisp of wool from the pile she guarded: the next customer would pay with a handful of berries. All contributions went into the carrier's sack, which must have contained a rare and heterogeneous medley before the end of the day.

Mohammed was conspicuous in the market. This is 'pure' Berber country, and he was the only man there wearing a red fez. To my surprise, I found him bargaining with a Jewish vendor for a short, curved sword in a decorated sheath. I dropped in periodically to watch his progress: gradually he argued the price down from 2,500 francs to 1,500. In another half-hour, presumably, business would be done. But I was wrong. Mohammed did not buy the sword—he never had any intention of buying it. All the time his eye was on a sack of wool among the stock of the next merchant—later he told me that his wife would weave it into a *djellabah*. The last hour or two had been a preliminary device to impress the wool merchant (who also sold sugar, rock-salt and ironmongery) that here was no amateur shopper.

When Mohammed settled down to the serious purpose of buying the wool, I opted for lunch. It was time that I 'went native' to a modest degree: there may have been a French establishment somewhere in the town, but I preferred an Arab café. True, the kitchen conditions were not very impressive, but I argued that the chef could not very well spoil boiled eggs. I omitted one consideration—he might forget to boil them. He frankly admitted his error—there must be something wrong with the water—and suggested that he should use them to make an omelette instead. I agreed, and the result was very satisfactory—though I would have been grateful for the loan of the Sultan's fly-swishers.

III

Traffic in and about the little town was considerable. If a donkey were overloaded, a peasant used his wife as an auxiliary: or, sometimes, as a substitute. Women staggered along, bending almost double under huge bundles of wood or sacks of produce. The Berber women were unveiled, and it was good to see a pleasant face instead of a disfiguring veil. But they age rapidly, for their life is very hard. The young matron of Western Europe, one of the finest types of modern civilization, is sadly missing. A girl becomes an old woman in a very few years, and remains old until she dies. I saw one wrinkled woman struggling with a huge basket, carried on her head—and the inevitable baby strapped to her back. I imagined her to be its grandmother, so great was her apparent age, but as soon as she had found a place in the market she began to suckle it.

I made my exit from the *souk* after a little difficulty, for a young camel had taken a fancy to me, and followed me around. I thought he might be satisfied if I took his photograph, but this only served to flatter him, and his attentions became even more friendly. His owner, not unnaturally, was rather suspicious: this could be the latest form of confidence trick.

However, I managed to lose the camel in the crowd which gathered to watch Mohammed force his sack of wool into the luggage space of the car. Again we sped to the west, passing another succession of fortified villages, and then a long stretch of stony desert.

The previous day, at Tinerhir, I had suggested that it might rain. True, I had no knowledge of desert conditions, and might have been misled by the signs. But after Skoura the sky darkened: swirling dust revealed cyclonic movements in the air: we passed into a violent dust storm. For once Mohammed needed no urging to slow down, for we could scarcely see a dozen yards ahead through the thick cloud of red sand.

Then the rain began—no gentle dew from heaven, but a torrent. The dust formed a thick layer of mud on the wind-

screen. The hard earth road rapidly became a river—it was hard to distinguish its course from the neighbouring ground, which was also flooded. I have always suspected the word 'cloudburst', used to describe heavy rain. But if clouds do really burst, the one above us did.

I was a little anxious, for ahead of us were some unbridged rivers. The first came early, and was easily negotiated. The second was incredible. When we had crossed it a few days earlier it was a mere trickle over the rocks: now it was a swirling torrent a foot deep: it seemed to be visibly rising—for the hard earth could not absorb the rain, and the entire neighbourhood was pouring the fierce torrent of water into the river.

I invited an immediate soaking by getting out of the car to reconnoitre. I thought it could be done—if we waited, conditions would get worse every minute. (I heard later that a car which left Skoura half an hour after us failed to get through.) I worked out a course which would enable Mohammed to keep the head of the car against the main force of the stream, and he proved his quality by getting it over. Thence the journey to Ouarzazate was one long muddy splash.

Yet my reputation as a weather prophet was not vindicated. The downpour was local—no rain fell at Tinerhir!

At Ouarzazate the rain was welcomed: it was too late to help the crops, but water is always a boon.

"Mind, you can have too much of it," said a French officer there. "You see our modest river? After one rainy season it overflowed so strongly that the entire oasis was submerged—a mile of swirling water. Suddenly, too. Orson Welles was here shooting some scenes for a film, 'The Black Robe'. His leading lady happened to be in a village across the valley when the waters rose, and she was stranded for eight days! And, I assure you, it was no publicity stunt—it happened, and it must have been very costly."

"And what did Mr. Welles say?"

"I regretted more than ever that I do not understand English!"

The weekly market at Ouarzazate was fascinating, for among its clients were men of the desert tribes. One old man had made a long journey by camel to sell a small collection of

carpets and pottery. He was delighted at my interest: I could not carry a carpet, but I bought a pottery figure of a man riding a camel. It was childish in its crudity: the man was just a series of blobs of clay: but the delight of the ancient was worth more than the three shillings involved in the purchase.

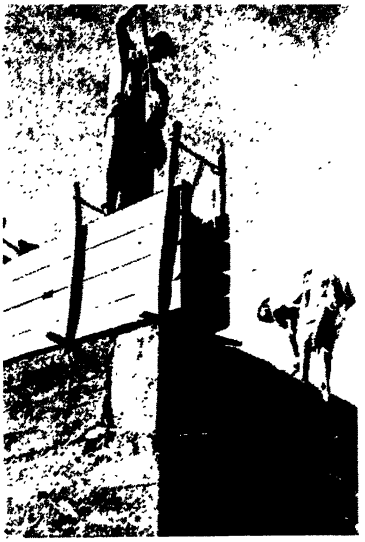
In tiny workshops, the size of a large box, men were working on filigree jewellery. In other rooms—slightly larger—women toiled at carpet-making. Ouarzazate is noted for its peculiar designs—featuring black, since the local flocks include an undue proportion of black sheep. Potters were at work in nearby caves. A village on the other side of the oasis was famous for its tanners. Their methods were primitive: skins of goats and sheep were stripped of hair, soaked in charcoal-water for eight days in ancient pots let into the ground, then scrubbed white and dyed. The result—the beautiful leather for which Morocco is famous, supple yet strong.

Just outside Ouarzazate was the *kasbah* of Taourirt, an amazing conglomeration of buildings. It belongs to the Glaoui family, and I found a nephew of the Pasha of Marrakesh in residence. It was built in feudal days, to house retainers as well as the family, and I should guess that it could accommodate two or three thousand people within its walls. Around the great towers—which contain the principal rooms—is a maze of narrow alleys giving on to meaner dwellings. Every chief in his day must have added to the place, without pattern. Yet the *kasbah* has its unity, in spite of its lack of design and its irregular agglomeration: all its buildings are in the local style, of pressed earth, so that the addition of yesterday can scarcely be distinguished from its centuries-old neighbour. The solid walls emphasize its purpose: this was a feudal fortress, built to dominate the valley and to defy the raiding tribesmen. The feudal idea dies hard in any country: not even a revolution can entirely eradicate it. Here it is part of the Berber tradition. It fits strangely and insecurely in a modern world, but it has one redeeming feature—it is understood.

The time came when I had to re-cross the Atlas. The utter barrenness of the southern slopes, save for the green patches by the riverside, was again startling, and even the thin scrub on the slopes of the higher mountains was a relief.

At the pass I halted: some would class the extreme south as the most primitive corner of Morocco—but they would be wrong. Standards of living there, I was to discover, were at least as high as those further north, and standards of accommodation even higher. The people are more enterprising: when their own region fails to provide a livelihood, they venture abroad: yet almost always they return to their own land. Fifty years ago life must have been exciting and dramatic, with its raids and internecine strife. Today the region is the calmest and most serene zone of insecurity I have ever encountered.

13. Hutted village on the Central Plain



14. Adding another storey, Tinerhir

15. Nomad *Douar*

Moroccan homesteads

16. Elementary education

17. The Khalifa dispenses justice; the Frenchman observes

CHAPTER SEVEN

BIRTHDAY TREAT

I

I NEEDED some money at Marrakesh, but the banks were closed. French banks do close on the slightest provocation. I had been embarrassed earlier, where the excuse for closing was May 1st. Saturdays and Mondays are always problematical; but now, it appeared, the date was May 8th—the anniversary of the armistice of 1945. Mention of the date reminded me that it was my fifty-fifth birthday—and that I had not spent a birthday at home since 1939.

However, French hotels are more than hosteleries, and the cashier at the Mamounia was true to the traditions of her kind: this was altruistic, as I was not a client of the hotel, which is too grand for my currency. Further, she invited me to walk in the hotel's lovely gardens, nestling just inside the city walls.

Financially re-established, I went to buy a picture postcard, but all the shops were closed. However, I chanced on the camel market, which is held every Thursday morning. My father, who used to deal in horses, would have been quite at home. The same expounding of virtues, the same long haggling over prices—only the animals differed.

Mohammed drove southwards at speed over the bare plain. But, as a fringe of green appeared, we turned aside to the Cavagnac Barrage—named after the engineer who built it. This is devoted not so much to irrigation as to power generation, but the resultant lake is welcome in a parched land.

Now the road approached the mountains. The villages were infrequent, and their houses not nearly as pretentious as those south of the Atlas. Here were no exuberant towers and decorations—just one-storey huts of pressed mud.

A friend had telephoned to M. Robert, Controlleur Civile at Amizmiz—equivalent to the *Officier des Affaires Indigènes*

south of the range, where military control still prevails. At one end of M. Robert's lovely garden was the Maison d'Hôtes, the official guest-house which was to be my abode.

Three guns in M. Robert's hall suggested a huntsman, but most of his trophies were brought home alive. A baby jackal roamed about the house—and its antics as it played with a Siamese kitten were comic indeed. In the garden were a gazelle and a wild boar: I was assured that the boar could be tamed, but this specimen had evidently not understood this: he made a vicious attempt to bite me.

There was a piano in the lounge, and while servants gathered oranges in the garden, M. Robert revealed himself as a Bach enthusiast, rolling out the grand chords with sympathetic skill. Then we got to work. First a case had to be tried, held over from the previous day. It was all very informal. In a bare room M. Robert sat at a plain table with the local caid: the spectators squatted on rush mats on the floor. The case was a boundary dispute between two peasants, and it was taken with the deliberation which Arab custom demands.

M. Robert made no direct entry into the proceedings: his function was advisory. Only if a caid or pasha makes what is palpably a wrong judgment does the French officer intervene. Such poor judgments *can* occur, for the system of appointment to judicial posts is not perfect. The French may have been over-anxious to respect local traditions, for had they brutally abolished some aspects of Arab 'justice' they would have saved themselves much trouble. When a caid or pasha is needed, the French make nominations to the Sultan: after prolonged negotiations into which financial inducements enter, he chooses the candidate. It is quite common for the latter to make a 'present' to the Sultan—a million francs would be suitable for one of the less important appointments. Thus there is a great temptation to a judge to recover his outlay by corrupt methods, and even to make a profit on the transaction. A pasha, by the way, is the judge for a town, a caid for a country district. Actually the administration of justice is only part of his task: he has many executive functions, akin to those of a governor: he appoints khalifas, or caliphs, to represent him in his different functions.

In the case of Amizmiz no intervention was necessary. The

caid was dignified and obviously respected, and when he made his judgment it was friendly and persuasive, albeit with authority, and was accepted without question.

Amizmiz is at the junction of mountain and plain, and also at the intersection of Arab and Berber zones. That is to say, two systems of justice functioned. The caid was the judge for criminal cases in both regions, but whereas disputes about marriage settlements, succession and the like were tried in the Arab districts by a *cadi*, attached to a mosque, and on the basis of Koranic law, the Berber method differs—since the famous *dahir* of 1930 restored their right to use their traditional practices. Groups of Berber tribes, or fractions of tribes, elect six judges, who try cases according to Berber traditions and usages.

As we wandered about, I gained an insight into the multiplicity of a Civil Controller's duties. I had noticed that each officer had his own 'pet' scheme. M. Robert's special interest was in olives.

In his immediate district were more than 200,000 olive trees, belonging to hundreds of peasants—who were, as so often, exploited by the merchants from the towns. Acting individually, the peasants were in a poor condition to make a good bargain, and sold their olives at the low price of 15 francs per kilogramme. So, three years earlier, a co-operative had been formed. The merchants now faced, not a horde of small producers, but a powerful organization, with an astute Frenchman at its head. The delighted peasants saw their price rise year by year until now it had reached 26 francs.

Yet this was only the beginning. The co-operative retained one franc of the price, and had now erected its own plant for pressing the olives and extracting the oil. It was an immediate success, and was working a 24-hour day in three shifts, taking about half of the locally produced olives. It served another useful purpose in providing employment for landless men, who worked for 300 francs a day. The scheme was enormously popular—except, of course, with the merchants of the towns.

It is more difficult to extend such plans to agriculture generally, for the local people are determined individualists—despite their long record of communal activities. A start has

been made, however, in a modest form of mutual insurance against disasters to crops.

Another of M. Robert's enthusiasms was tree-planting—150,000 trees had been planted in the last year, half of them to bear olives and fruits. Amizmiz has its own nursery in which the stripling trees are grown. And he was as excited as a schoolboy when a steam-roller lurched along the valley—now he could get on with his project of improving the roads.

The atmosphere of the region was friendly and homely. The headman of one village appeared—a panther had killed a calf: could anything be done? Yes, a special hunt should be organized. There are few panthers in this part of the Atlas, but large numbers of wild boar, who are destructive to the crops, and of jackals, who kill any unprotected lambs.

Another man came along with a complaint: his land lay along the borders of two tribal holdings, and he had been taxed in both! M. Robert gave him a note which would put things right, and the French Protectorate had no firmer champion than the delighted peasant. The incident served as a reminder that it was taxing day for the neighbouring Ouled Mtaa tribe: we forced the car along a rough track and across a river to the principal village.

Khalifa Si el Hadj Hassan Mtouggi was in charge, a venerable and dignified elder deserving of respect for his own personality as well as for the pilgrimage to Mecca which the title 'Hadj' implied.

The system of taxation is simple—it has to be, if it is to be accepted in a rural area. There is a head tax on each man—640 francs a year. (For rough calculations the franc can be taken as at 1,000 to the £.) He can, however, commute this tax by giving four days' labour. It was significant of rising local standards that most men now elect to pay in cash.

The other form of taxation, the *tertib*, now in progress, was a rustic equivalent of income tax, based upon property—that is, upon animals and crops, but not upon houses, contents or farm plant. The khalifa sat at a table: in his courtyard dozens of men squatted on the floor: naturally there was no suggestion of hurry. Each man in his turn went to the table and made a declaration of his wealth. An inspector who had made a preliminary survey checked this, but I noticed that in no case did

he have to challenge the declaration—the Berber peasant is fundamentally honest. Then the tax on the animals was calculated.

(As a matter of interest, I made a note of the amounts, which were not excessive. For each camel a man paid 150 francs, mule 180, horse 90, donkey 25, cow 280, calf 180, sheep 60, goat 25. The importance of the cow in rural economy will be noted. On corn crops the tax was 70 francs per 100 kilogrammes—no crop, no tax. The method of taxing was a fair representation of peasant wealth and—just as important—it was accepted as fair by the people concerned. The average amount was less than 3,000 francs.)

The file of tax-payers ended. The khalifa's retainers spread carpets and mattresses over the dried mud courtyard, and the inevitable mint tea appeared, with almonds and walnuts. The aged khalifa had a rare sense of humour, and drew me into a comparison of customs in Morocco and Kenya. He chuckled with glee at my description of the purchase of brides in Kenya, and the methods of avoiding payment adopted by dissatisfied husbands.[1]

We were getting on so well that I was not surprised when he invited us to a *diffa* on the morrow. Yet the hours had passed so happily that we were startled when the *muezzin* made his evening call from the nearby mosque—a primitive construction in the inevitable beaten earth. Now we faced a problem. The track had been precarious enough in daylight, but in the dark it would be more than dangerous. We prepared to walk.

But the khalifa produced mules. I hoisted myself on to a wooden saddle draped with a blanket so ingeniously arranged that its folds served as stirrups. So we jogged homewards to supper: then we sang some of Schubert's songs, and as I listened to more Bach the baby jackal went to sleep on my knee. Through the window the moonlight picked out the snows of Atlas in a scene of exquisite beauty.

It had been a happy day. I had learned much—and how could I have spent my birthday more profitably?

[1] See my *Middle Eastern Journey*, Gollancz, 1947.

II

During the first World War I had the reputation of being the worst horseman in the British Army, and of knowing more methods of descending from a horse's back than the drill-book ever thought of. Once I fell off during a general parade—and the horse was standing still at the time.

Hence I was somewhat disconcerted to find two large mules at my door early the following morning. One carried the local wooden saddle, but the other had a more elaborate construction —Arab style, locally dubbed the Fez saddle, comfortably padded, and with a humped back on which the rider can lean.

(Later I discovered why it was assumed without question that I was an expert muleteer. The previous evening, as I sat my mule, the khalifa had handed me a short stick. I did not hit my mount: from some quite unconscious store of knowledge I knew that the proper thing to do was to prod him in the middle of the back of his neck, and he would march. This trifle had been duly noted.)

The Civil Controller's chief assistant, M. Stehelin, was to accompany me on a round which would reveal more facets of the local life. He wore a khaki uniform—this is the common practice, and is sagacious enough in a country where military virtues are esteemed. I was glad to find that I had been allocated the Fez saddle: it was ensconced on M. Robert's own mule, Fringante.

The animal regarded me with justified anxiety as I mounted. His owner was not small, but I am definitely large. However, after a few preliminary protests, she accepted the situation philosophically and thereafter behaved as a good mule should.

Our first halt was at a stock-breeding station. The French are trying to improve local stocks, and Amizmiz boasted two stallions, two bulls, and two donkeys. Close by was a building under construction—the equivalent of a workhouse, or relief institution. Following the terrible drought of 1945, hundreds of people were literally starving, and the French had to improvise relief measures. It is hoped that the necessity will not arise again, but Nature is not affected by Nationalism or

political speeches, and the French are preparing suitable feeding and lodging centres against such an emergency. The previous winter rains had been poor, and while there was no likelihood of famine the crops were unlikely to be good.

Fringante toiled up to a hill village, famous for its corporation of potters. The corporation is a guild rather than a trade union. Each man works individually, but the guild lays down standards of production and fixes prices. Here there was no pretence to art, save the art of craftsmanship. Local earth and water formed the clay, and the products were utility household utensils. The potter sat on the edge of a hole in the ground: his feet rested on a solid wheel two feet below, and his toes revolved it in a steady rhythm: in turn it propelled the wheel on which he worked his clay. Before he commenced, however, he murmured "Bismallah"—an invocation to Allah. No toil, meal or other action is begun without such a prayer.

Now we descended to a valley: the river was almost dried up, so we used its bed as a path, leading towards the mountains. Such water as flowed was cunningly diverted to serve a series of mills. As the grindstones turned, a primitive yet ingenious device released a few grains of corn at a time. A crude basket hung above, with a suitably fashioned outlet: this was closed by a piece of wood, the other end of which touched the moving stone. The vibration made the loose wooden stopper wobble, to release the grains at a remarkably consistent rate.

"It is good," said a peasant squatting by his donkey, as I lifted a handful of flour.

"It is good," I agreed.

"One day I went to Marrakesh," he went on. "There I had white bread. But the corn had been crushed between metal rollers. That is not good. Corn and stone are natural together. Metal gives a taste—a bad taste. This is good."

We plunged into wilder mountain country, leaving the bed of the stream for a rocky path. Fringante trod it with secure deliberation. It is strange: we sneer at the mule, call him stupid and stubborn; yet we entrust our lives to him. One slip by Fringante, and I would not be writing these lines. But I gave her her head, and she made no mistake: for one spell I did

not descend for nearly three hours, making my notes and taking my photographs in the saddle.

We passed occasional flocks of sheep and goats on the mountainside. The predatory panther had impelled strict guard, and any truant sheep was sternly disciplined by the dogs. The mountain slopes had a thin covering of scrub: their summits were rounded and not impressive, and I was amazed when M. Stehelin informed me that we had passed the 6,000 feet line.

We turned by a cross-country route to descend to Amizmiz, the principal town of the region—population 3,500, of whom 800 are Jews, the local traders and shoemakers. The main street was in some confusion. For long the water supply had been unsatisfactory: it depended on cisterns, filled during the rainy season—and a poor season could mean no water. Trenches had therefore been dug and pipes were being laid to a spring three miles up the mountain valley.

We called at the local central school—older and more pretentious than those I had seen on the other side of the Atlas. It housed over 200 pupils, including some drawn from the simpler elementary schools in outlying villages. It differed also in that it had one class of girls, soon to be extended. In this school tuition was in both French and Arabic.

The fourth-year students were doing problems of mensuration and decimals with apparent ease, and their French was advanced. A class of beginners were already reading well after six months. One of the 'problems' I set them was a lively success. "If I had two oranges in one hand and three bananas in the other, how many oranges would I have altogether?" The general answer was five—but there was a burst of delighted laughter when at last they saw the catch.

Yet, if the scholastic work was impressive, the handwork was amazing. A native carpenter instructed the boys, who were making school desks in expert fashion. Even more remarkable was the work in the pottery shed, where the boys produced artistically decorated designs of traditional patterns—and also statuettes of original quality. Adjoining was a ten-acre field in which the science of agriculture was taught very practically. In some British colonies we made the mistake of training too many lawyers: the French are cashing-in on the long-delayed

demand for education by aiming at producing better artisans, farmers and citizens. More money is needed, for with the present outlook the possibility of universal education is at hand: and, soap-box orators should note, many more teachers are also needed: emotional words can never replace education.

We called on the caid in his *kasbah*, not nearly as extensive as those south of the Atlas, but with pleasant rooms flanking a tiled court. As we reclined on divans, I noticed a strip of writing affixed to the entrance to the room. It was a charm against invading scorpions: I could only hope that the local insects could read it.

The clacking of beaks interrupted conversation over mint tea. The stork carries the same legend in Morocco as in Alsace: if he chooses your house for a nest, he brings good fortune with him. If this is true, the prosperity of the caid should be assured, for no less than eighteen couples of storks had nested on the towers of his *kasbah*.

(A Moslem legend about the stork is perhaps more intriguing. Apparently a sultan laughed irreligiously at pilgrims who came to pay him homage, and Allah in wrath changed him into a stork. Hence his descendants always settle on Moslem houses, recognizing the true faith and ignoring Europeans and Jews.)

A hospital, not yet completed, next claimed our attention. A French doctor was due to take up his post later in the month: in the meantime a district nurse was doing a wonderful job.

I sat throughout the next morning in a corner of M. Robert's office, watching him deal with an endless queue of clients—with problems far more subtle than a panther's depredations or double taxation.

"This is a man's life," he said later, when I discussed with him the achievements and problems of his region. He was right. His own happiness was apparent—the joy of a constructive task. No one save the most blind of Nationalists could fail to give credit to French achievement in Morocco: I myself would bestow the greater part on the devoted band of men and women who have laboured in the outlying regions, almost ignored and sometimes discouraged by the more 'advanced' Moroccan townsmen. And by a considerable section of their own countrymen. The military *Officiers des Affaires Indigènes*

have been properly publicized in France, but the Civil Controllers—who do exactly similar work north of the Atlas—have been too often overlooked. Further, one group of French politicians now seeks by every method to besmirch the French administration and achievement in Morocco.

Later I was to discuss the possible effects of a French withdrawal: one thing was already clear—at least so far as the South was concerned—it might be debatable whether it would lead to Moroccan collapse, but certainly it would abruptly halt Moroccan progress.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MINERALS AND A MARRIAGE

I

Of all my contacts in Morocco, none was more rewarding than the Khalifa Si el Hadj Hassan Mtouggi. He had dignity and wisdom—and a sense of humour. After the *diffa* we chatted and joked. Arab culture is rich in stories of animals—especially of clever or cunning animals. I could not recall many Brer Rabbit episodes, but scored a great success with a story of bears in Texas.

A Texan huntsman was troubled by bears in his garden. One night he heard a noise, and went out. There he saw two bright eyes gleaming in the darkness. Aiming between them, he fired. But in the morning he was astonished: he was a crack shot, but there was no bear's body to be found.

Twice the episode was repeated and twice he fired, but found no bear. It was incredible to think that he had missed. So he went into town and bought a powerful torch. At night the two eyes appeared once more: he fired, and immediately switched on his torch. Then he discovered that Texas bears are very cunning. Knowing the man's reputation as a dead shot, two of them had clubbed together to raid his garden. When he appeared, one had closed his left eye, the other his right—so the man had fired between their heads! This narration produced as near to loud laughter as an Arab ever permitted himself.

The feast was only slightly less sumptuous than that at Marrakesh. There being only six of us, a mere half-sheep was roasted. Then followed chickens with boiled dates and onions: lamb stewed with peaches: kous-kous with vegetables, eggs and meat—and three or four other courses. As the khalifa's rank was two degrees lower than that of the Sultan, only one fly-swisher was in action, persuading the flies to keep moving.

We lounged on mattresses and cushions, exchanging animal stories. The room adjoined the courtyard, and pigeons waited anxiously for the scraps which would be theirs. The window-sills were strewn with crushed roses, which gave a pleasant perfume.

The conversation became more serious. We talked of local aspirations. There is no need for revolutionary methods: on the material side the French have made an excellent beginning —the need of today is a rapid advancement in the work so well begun.

Ironically, one aspect of the French success has provoked new problems. As we shall see, the medical resources of Morocco are still lacking, but much work has been done in the control of disease, and especially in the staying of the plagues of infection which intermittently swept the country. The expectation of life has therefore greatly increased, and the population has more than doubled. The resulting problem is to find employment for the increased numbers. A peasant farmer had four sons, shall we say. In older days two or three of them would die young of disease or violence: today all or most survive. Yet his little holding could scarcely support four families when the time comes for him to pass on. The problem is not peculiar to Morocco—it is encountered in every peasant country. Surplus population on the land is a form of hidden unemployment, and is a problem of great urgency.

Si Hassan's roots were firmly planted in his native soil, and he had little patience with townsmen who advanced fancy theories. One of his comments was devastatingly forcible.

"I work with the French, not because they are the masters, but because they have brought peace to my country," he said. "You have no conception of the anarchy and lawlessness of the old days. You noticed that last night I sent a man with you, to bring back the mules. Yet he was unarmed. Forty years ago I would have turned out a strong armed guard, otherwise you would never have got back to Amizmiz. Not because you were foreigners. As a young man, I dared not stray from my village after dark, lest my throat be cut. And now we have peace and the rule of law. Surely this is the will of Allah!"

II

One attempt to solve the problem of the surplus peasant population has already been partly effective, and in time could become even more important. The mineral resources of Morocco are enormous. In the past they were always ignored: now, exploitation has begun. As they are mostly to be found in rural areas, they draw on local villages for their labour.

There are several mines in the Amizmiz region, and I drove out to that at Azegour. The road mounted to a pass at 6,000 feet, then revealed a remarkable valley. The enclosing mountains topped 10,000 feet, but were conventionally shaped, their rounded summits with few suggestions of grandeur. But here was a valley of rugged brown-red rock, suggesting violent convulsions when the region was being shaped by Nature: weathering of the jagged slopes had completed a picture of sheer fantasy.

The mine consisted of galleries bored into the mountainside. Trucks emerged, laden with grey rock: it looked ordinary enough, but experts declared that it contained copper and tungsten. They had devised clever methods of extracting the ores. Nature hides her secrets cunningly, but the ingenuity of man seems able to penetrate them all if patiently applied. I saw the rock crushed to a powder: some was washed over boards which jigged constantly, leaving the valuable tungsten while the residue was washed away.

The extraction of the copper was even more ingenious. Since the metal is heavier than the surrounding rock, a method had to be devised to make it float while the residue sank so that it could be scooped from the top of the mixture. The powder was soaked in palm oil, which attached itself to the particles of copper but ignored the residue rock: air was pumped in, and the copper floated on top of a vat of water supported by bubbles of oil.

The laboratory was in charge of an Austrian girl chemist, enjoying her work but pining for her own mountains. The manager of the mine produced a variety of prehistoric implements discovered in the workings.

Figures quoted to me showed that the mine was very important

in Moroccan economy—and it was one of many. A visiting officer of the Geological Service provided a striking commentary.

"After agriculture, mining is Morocco's largest industry," he said. "In 1951 it accounted for 31 per cent of the country's exports.

"Its most important aspect is the extraction of phosphates in the Khouribga and Louis-Gentil areas. This accounts for four-fifths by weight of the mineral production, and it can be increased almost indefinitely to meet world demand—the reserves can be considered as inexhaustible.

"World requirements of phosphates are about twenty million tons—and Morocco supplies nearly five million! Incidentally, Algeria and Tunis between them supply very nearly another five million.

"It may be that phosphate mining will enter another phase. We have found traces of uranium."

"In economic quantities?"

"No, not yet. But while the world thinks about atomic bombs, it wants uranium, whether the price is economic or not. Really, I'm talking before my time on this subject—ask me next year, then we shall know better what are the practical possibilities."

"Any oil?"

"A little. We have fourteen small oil-fields working, and are prospecting in other areas—we have hopes in the Fez-Meknes region. So far our oil production is slightly less than 100,000 tons a year, but even that is very useful. And we have our own refinery. We have also traced the existence of natural gas deposits, but we have to determine whether they can be exploited to advantage."

"I believe you have some coal?"

"Yes, anthracite—also useful here. You know that the local people use charcoal for most of their cooking, and the forests have been continuously depleted for centuries, so that supplies are low. Anthracite might be used instead. So far we are raising about 400,000 tons a year—but it is estimated that the reserves in the Djerade district alone exceed 200 million tons. There may be others. The geological survey is by no means complete.

"Some of our other minerals are very important," he went

on, with the enthusiasm of the professional. "Manganese ore—350,000 tons a year: iron ore—550,000 tons: lead ore—100,000 tons: zinc ore—40,000 tons—these are quantities worth having. There is a very wide range of other minerals in smaller quantities—antimony, copper, cobalt, tungsten—even a little gold and silver. And beryl."

"Beryl? I never heard of it."

"You will."

"But Beryl is a girl's name."

"Not this one. It is a mineral used in atomic research. It yields the element beryellum. The name comes from a Latin word meaning 'green'—the colour of the mineral. So far we are producing no more than 100 tons a year, but that's only the beginning.

"In fact, in most branches of Moroccan mining you might say that we are not far from the beginning. The next twenty years will see a big increase."

"The Moroccans make good miners, I believe—I seem to remember having met them in French pits."

"Oh, yes, they're very good. To date, we've had to supply the technicians and most of the skilled workers——"

"Yes, I noticed that here."

"It's fairly general. If a local man can earn a living as a miner, he's seldom ambitious enough to study so as to do better. But we are establishing specialized schools, and we think we shall get enough recruits to make it worth while."

"How does the organization work—prospecting and exploiting minerals, I mean?

"The State is the big boss. You need a permit even for research work, and then you're still closely controlled. Some of the mining companies buy concessions from the State—outright, or on a royalty basis. You can guess that the State gets its share! For most practical purposes, some of the big enterprises are nationalized. Their finances get a bit mixed, as you can guess. One of the biggest oil companies, for example, belongs fifty-fifty to the French government and the Sultan. After all, we did make a fairly clean start here—until we took over, mining was only desultory. So we were able to organize without the complications you find in more highly developed countries."

One of the greatest handicaps to Moroccan mining arises from Nature's habit of hiding her treasures in places difficult of access. The phosphates are easy to get at—but most of the coal comes from Eastern Morocco, hundreds of miles from any industrial centres. And the other minerals—Azegour was a fair example: its products are valuable indeed, but it has been necessary to drive a road for forty miles over difficult mountain country in order to market them.

III

The invitation to the wedding came from Si el Hadj Bouih ben El Hadj Allal, sheik of Ouaouzelt, and grandfather of the bride. The young lady, of course, was not present. The marriage contracts had been arranged and exchanged by the two families; a few days later the girl would be carried to the bridegroom's house, her body stained with henna in seductive patterns, and with the consummation the marriage ceremonies would be completed. Since both families followed Arab traditions—though their race was Berber—the young couple had not seen each other—at least, not since they were tiny children. It must be an awkward moment for a young man, whatever his confidence in his parents' judgment, when he first gazes on the bride they had chosen for him. What a gamble! Is she beautiful, or have the older folks been guided by considerations of family or of business? Is she light-skinned or near-negro? Is she a good cook? Has she a vicious tongue? The young man has had the replies to his questions by proxy from his parents, but now he must face the awful or delicious reality.

As we arrived in the village, the men and boys lined one side of the street, drums beating loudly to honour the guests—male members of the families, local celebrities, French officials, and myself. From the housetops came the you-you of the women. "They make the noise by rolling up their tongues inside their mouths," someone explained.

The *diffa* was to be served in the open air. Rich carpets had been laid between an avenue of trees, with gaily coloured mattresses and cushions. When we were settled, the low round tables were placed in position. As a visitor, I was placed at the

18. The Author demonstrates a British meat ration; the Caid attacks the roast sheep

19. Side dishes for a *diffa*

man busied himself in picking up twigs and thorns. I found that he was the principal dancer, and of course had to think of his bare feet.

He was more than a dancer—he was a comedian. He danced on his feet, on his knees, and on his behind. His caricatures were so comic that I roared with laughter: I could not understand a word of his patter, but his gestures and facial expressions stamped him as a Berber Danny Kaye. One minute he was a tired old man, the next a fish: then a warrior, a panther, a baby, and a woman. The audience called out for their favourite characters, and he obliged. Everything was informal: at one phase he danced along the carpets between us, leaping over our legs or knees. His supporters kept up a continuous chant to the beat of the drums.

Two members of the orchestra fascinated me. One kept the drums to the correct rhythm by banging on a metal ring which, if I were not mistaken, was part of the innards of a motor car. But he got so interested in his companion's patter that occasionally he rolled with laughter and missed his beat: however, the drummers seemed to know the tune. The other was a piper: his instrument was home-made, like a wooden version of an extremely fat tin whistle. This he played with great enthusiasm. Apparently it needed copious supplies of wind, for his cheeks bulged outwards like balloons. I could scarcely take my eyes from them, wondering if they could or would burst. He himself had no inhibitions: he piped assiduously if not musically for an hour or more at a stretch.

After about four hours we rose to go—the celebrations would continue until the following morning. The women missed all the fun—they could only watch from the distant rooftops. The drums assembled to beat a massed farewell: in a distant village a girl was preparing for the most important journey of her life. Maybe, despite the frightening anticipatory gossip of her women attendants, she was in some ways better prepared for the ordeal of meeting her mate than he was. The veil is something of a fraud: it can successfully disguise a girl's beauty, but it leaves her eyes free. Thus, while the man can gather only the haziest idea of her features, she can have a very good look at his.

CHAPTER NINE

THE GLAOUI

I

His full title is Son Excellence el Hadj Thami el Glaoui, Pacha de Marrakesh, but he is commonly called El Glaoui —the Glaoui. As an unofficial title, he has often been dubbed the Sultan of the South: more colloquially, the Black Panther.

His power is vast. As pasha of Marrakesh he is the city's legal and executive authority. In this, however, he is subject to French 'advice'. The system is that pashas or caids shall try all cases involving Moroccans only—save the religious issues, which are tried by *cadis*, and which include such matters as property or marriage disputes. The pashas or caids may nominate khalifas for any branch of their work, and a French civil servant is at hand to see fair play. In criminal justice, pashas and caids try minor cases, involving sentences up to two years' imprisonment. Graver charges are sent on to the Sherifian Court at Rabat.

If Europeans are implicated in a case, it is tried before a French court, with counsel and jury. The persons involved may choose either an all-French jury or a mixed French-Moroccan —and they nearly always choose the former. The penal code is exceedingly good: it was created by a single disinterested legal authority, not bowdlerized by compromises between opposing political and financial interests.

Yet so far French law does not apply to purely Moroccan cases. When the French took over in 1912, their first instinct was to abolish the old feudal customs and to substitute a modern judicial system. But it was obvious that such changes would be violently resisted in Morocco—Marshal Lyautey estimated that if the authority of the pasha of Marrakesh were abolished, two French divisions would be needed to keep order in this area

alone. The old system was therefore retained, with some reforming influences.

Nevertheless, many possibilities of abuse remain. The pasha of a city has plenty of opportunities for arbitrary action—and financial advantages. There is a system of 'gifts' in Morocco, in some ways very pleasing. If a man sends you a letter—even an invitation to dinner—he will attach a gift to it: maybe flowers, or jewellery. The abuses of such a custom in legal circles are obvious. No Moroccan believes that he can even hope for justice unless he sends a gift to the judge. When the Sultan needs more money, he makes a state visit to a region, and receives 'gifts' from his subjects—his clerks carefully noting whether each man has given enough.

The Glaoui is not only pasha of Marrakesh: he is head of the Glaoui group of tribes, which occupy territory far beyond the Atlas Mountains. Following a series of tribal wars, astute political moves, and judicious marriages, his family has become almost omnipotent astride the Atlas. He, too, receives feudal 'gifts' from his people. Should any man prove recalcitrant, he might possibly be invited to think it over. The tradition is an inherent defect of the present system. The French have adhered too long to native custom: in their desire to interfere as little as possible with Moroccan ideas they have delayed reforms until they are now overdue.

Yet the Glaoui is even more than a pasha and a feudal chief: he is a personality, and in Morocco this counts most of all. His authority is tremendous: he is the overlord of more than a million people. It should be noted, too, that it far exceeds normal legal powers—it is personal.

Some months before my visit, some United Nations delegates from South American countries were invited to tour Morocco. Some of the Nationalist leaders decided to stage a demonstration to convince the visitors of the justice of the local cause. Hundreds of people gathered before the hotel at Casablanca: the idea was a few speeches and slogans, but, as often in such cases, the demonstration got out of hand. Some of the less self-controlled adherents began to throw stones at windows: the police were summoned, and there was a serious clash in which two people were killed and many injured.

Then the South American delegation moved on to Marrakesh,

where another demonstration had been arranged. Leaders gathered from the adjoining towns, and collected the small local Istiqlal following. The riffraff of the city fell in with glee—a demonstration and a clash might mean opportunities for loot. It was perhaps these gentry who, instead of listening to speeches, began to heave bricks through the windows of the hotel where the delegates were staying.

The manager, naturally enough, telephoned for the police. Had armed French police arrived, another clash would have been inevitable, probably involving bloodshed. But the pasha is chief of police as well as judge: to deal with the menacing situation he sent a force—one man, his major-domo, a dignified and very intelligent negro. This functionary walked on to the steps of the hotel and addressed the mixed assembly of orators and brick heavers. His speech was a model for brevity. "Go home, you scum!" he cried.

And they went home. The local men disappeared at once, hoodlums leading the way. Thus deserted by their local allies and casual supporters, the Nationalists from other cities also decided on a strategic retreat. Within five minutes the affair was over, and the major-domo returned alone to the pasha's palace.

Naturally, many Europeans would look askance at this authoritarian method. Some would have summoned the police in force, ordering shooting and mass arrests. Others would have called a council of conciliation, and have sought a 'formula' satisfying all parties. For the moment, however, the point is that the major-domo employed a traditional Moroccan practice, which was well understood and proved successful.

II

The Glaoui had been away during my first visit to Marrakesh, but now I could pay my formal call on him. After a brief halt at the palace gates, I was ushered into his study—a compromise between eastern and western influences. I was glad to find that we were to talk alone—I had heard that, like the Sultan, he insisted on the 'protocol' use of an interpreter although he

spoke French. However, his handshake and friendly greeting indicated that this was to be no formal occasion.

The pasha was a spare man, but erect: his complexion is very dark. His hands are as delicate as a woman's, and his manner is gentle. Yet these characteristics are misleading, for he has a reputation as a ruthless warrior, a tribal chief who holds his position by the force of his own personality. His status is unusual: the sultans discouraged the rise of men who might prove rivals—'Divide and rule' was their traditional policy. There are dozens of pashas and caids in Morocco, but only three or four who are men of power in their own right. The Glaoui is the most important of them all.

Although indoors, he wore the hood of his simple brown *djellabah* over his head. He received me with traditional Berber courtesy: once I stumbled over the conventional but to me unaccustomed *votre excellence* third-person mode of address. "Talk to me," he said simply.

The briefest acquaintance was enough to show that here was a real personality, a man of determined character: a bitter enemy, but a good friend.

"I am a friend of England," he announced. "I am a friend of Mr. Churchill." His arm indicated a presentation set of Churchill's books. "How is he?"

"I saw him in parliament a few weeks ago. He is wonderfully fit, and all his faculties are unimpaired."

"That is excellent. It is evident that he is still the man of action."

His comment prompted a remark when we went on to discuss Istiqlal—at the very mention of the name his eyes flashed with scornful anger.

"In the mountains I talked with a peasant," I said. "I asked him what he thought of Istiqlal, as I ask everyone. He replied: 'Istiqlal—Istiqlal—oh, you mean those people in the towns who talk!'"

"That was well said!" he exploded. Doubtless, had the peasant been present he would have shown some mark of favour. "Morocco wants work and common sense, not words. These people represent few but themselves. They have no great leader —and that is essential in Morocco. Now, if they had a Churchill——"

"Or a Glaoui," I interjected slyly.

"Yes, even a Glaoui," he smiled. "But they have no one. They do not even agree among themselves. But if they proceed with their mad schemes, they will find that *we* have plenty of friends—not only here and in the Sous, but in the north—even in Fez itself. Yes, I assure them that they are confronting something. But you are a traveller—you have doubtless seen things like this before."

"Yes. In Burma——"

"Ah, look at the confusion there, with a dozen parties pretending to be the master. No, if these Istiqlal broke away, they would not be the masters of Morocco: they would scarcely be the masters of Fez. But they are nothing."

In this he under-estimated his opponents, which is a mistake. But it is just as great an error—and a common modern failing—to *over*-estimate the strength of an enemy.

He returned to the same theme frequently, making it clear that deeds and not words were the basis of his faith—as they were of his life. Yet he is no mere brutal autocrat, but a man of great intelligence, with even a pretty wit. On one occasion a woman visitor, not knowing that he understood French, remarked to a companion: "What a pity to see such a beautiful ring on the finger of an old monkey." El Glaoui said nothing until the woman was about to leave. Then he plucked the ring from his finger. "Madame, permit an old monkey to present you with a beautiful ring."

'The old monkey' is a favourite expression on the lips of his opponents, but it is usually uttered in tones of apprehension or fear.

Some of those opponents would have been amazed to see the Glaoui I met—chuckling with glee at my quips or his own: commiserating with me tenderly when I told him that I had three daughters but no sons: discussing golf personalities—he has constructed his own golf-course near Marrakesh: or debating the respective intellectual qualities of Paris and London. When his interest was aroused, a new spark of vitality flashed in his tired eyes, and his face lost the mask of fatigue, the result of a long life lived hard. The tongue which had lashed in fury at opponents became as gentle as that of a nurse to an ailing child. Yet I knew that a biting phrase—and more—could be

aroused on slight provocation. It is amazing that he has not used up all the energy his spare frame could provide, but an ample reserve is still at hand.

"And how do you propose to arrange things with El Glaoui?" I asked later of a leading Nationalist.

"Oh, one day he will die."

This was a banal hedging of the question. Of course the Glaoui will die, but his succession is assured. There is much conjecture as to the inheritance. By Koranic law, the heir need not necessarily be the eldest son. El Glaoui has seven. Si Brahim, who had entertained me previously, was the eldest: he has inherited the good looks and charm of his mother, who had no fortune but great beauty. Later, El Glaoui's brother died, and by custom he took over the dead man's wives. One of them came of a very important family—she was the daughter of Mohammed el Mokri, for more than forty years Grand Vizier of Morocco. Hence her son, Si Sadaq, cannot be left out of consideration: he has a brilliant intellect, and is generally popular. Yet the signs to date point to Si Brahim as the heir.

At one time the French were considering the division of the pasha's wide authority among his sons. His powerful stand against the Istiqlal may modify this opinion. From time to time a rumour comes from Fez that this or that son of the Glaoui sympathizes with Istiqlal aims. This is emphatically denied: they are Nationalists in the sense of most Moroccans, in the love of their country and interest in its progress, but hitherto they have shown no signs of revolutionary tendencies, preferring gradual changes with French collaboration. True, Moslem sons are very subordinate to their father—especially if he is a personality like the Glaoui—and if they did hold contrary opinions they would be unlikely to express them during his lifetime.

Over a great area of Southern Morocco the authority of the pasha is unquestioned. Nor has he ever lacked courage or determination. More than once he has reprimanded the Sultan for the latter's apparent inclination towards the Istiqlal cause. I do not wonder that the Nationalist leaders are nervous of the Glaoui—for their pretended contempt is little more than a specious cover for alarm. Feudal autocracy has no part in my

own political creed, but Istiqlal has to consider conditions in Morocco as they are. It needs no imagination to suggest that if Istiqlal attempts to stage any form of *coup d'état*, the Glaoui will not appeal to the United Nations—he will march. Nor will he be gentle: but, especially if he appeared likely to be successful, he would find plenty of followers. For he is more than an outdated feudal survival—he is the symbol of the cleavage between country and town which is one of the bases of the Moroccan problem, and which any politician would be wise to recognize.

CHAPTER TEN

WAY DOWN SOUS

I

MOHAMMED halted the car and switched off the engine. I could not see why. True, the road from Marrakesh had plunged into a narrow gorge, but it was not as precipitous as others we had seen.

"There is a magic spring near here," he announced. "Someone told me."

The map indicated that the *Zaouia* of Moulay Brahim was on a hill flanking the road, and a stream was tumbling down the grassy slope. We began to follow its course, and after less than fifty yards Mohammed gave a shout of triumph. The hasty stream, driving the crude paddles of a little mill, passed beneath it in a rugged cave. In this a naked man was squatting: his contemplation may have been religious, but more probably expressed the effort of making up his mind to enter the water, which looked cold. Our appearance provided the necessary stimulus, and he crawled along the stream to a spot where the mill paddles splashed water all over him.

"What does it cure?" I asked.

"He doesn't know," said Mohammed. "But he will get virtue from the water—the stream rises by the *Zaouia*, which is a sacred place. So, you see, there is virtue in it."

The possibility of virtue was rather disturbed in my mind by the intrusion of the miller, who suggested amiably that a contribution of twenty francs would compensate him for our presence in his cave. So I resisted Mohammed's suggestion that I should myself essay the magic waters: presumably the fee for an immersion would be higher, and I did not think that virtue could be bought.

"And suppose a woman needs this treatment?" I asked of the miller.

"There is another place for them, a little further down." He pointed to a stone hut lower down the mountainside. "Women often need it," he added.

Just beyond was the village of Asni, which some enterprising but over-enthusiastic tourist agency has christened 'the Moroccan Chamonix'. True, it is well situated on a mountain spur, and is the nearest village to the highest massif of the High Atlas, offering serious climbs to investigating mountaineers. Yet it remains a village of mud huts, fitting into its scene like its scattered neighbours. Of these, the most interesting was Tin Mal.

One or two *ksars* in commanding positions on the heights suggested an importance which the thin scrub on the mountain slopes did little to support. Nor, from across the valley, did Tin Mal appear to differ from the other Berber villages of the region. Closer inspection, however, revealed one or two traces of older glories, for this mud village, clinging precariously to the mountain slope, was the cradle of a dynasty.

Early in the twelfth century a local personage named Mohammed Ibn Toumert made a pilgrimage to Mecca. While he prayed by the tomb of the Prophet, it was revealed to him that he was destined to rule Morocco. Back at home he found a disciple, Abd el Moumene, and the two preached about the countryside—not only the virtues of Islam, but the vices of the reigning Sultan.

His Majesty was naturally displeased, and the two apostles retreated before his wrath to the village of Tin Mal, then almost inaccessible. From this centre they roused the mountain tribes to revolt: Ibn Toumert, however, died without fulfilling the prophecy, but his deputy carried on the campaign. Soon the Berber tribes were afire: the Sultan was defeated in a furious battle at Themcen. He escaped, but his frightened horse threw him at the edge of a precipice. The body was found and formally decapitated, and the Sultan's head dangled from a branch of a poplar at Tin Mal.

By 1147 Abd el Moumene had captured Marrakesh and made himself Sultan. His dynasty was that known as the Almohade, which produced so many builders of famous edifices. He himself set the precedent by building at Tin Mal a great mosque as the tomb of his master, Ibn Toumert. Alas, it has fallen

into utter ruin, and imagination is necessary to picture the mosque as the work of the same man who conceived the idea of the Koutoubia at Marrakesh.

Now the road mounted steeply in great loops, for the pass at Tizi n'Test is at 7,200 feet. Close at hand loomed the high mountains. They lack the individuality of the Alps or Pyrenees: there are few well-defined or isolated peaks. Instead, long ridges, mounting rapidly from the plains to commanding heights with a suggestion of immense power—small wonder that the ancients identified this range with a god who could support the whole world on his shoulders.

The view from the pass to the north was limited by the crowded mountains, but to the south stretched the great plain of the Sous, six thousand feet below. In the distance, through a gathering heat haze, I could make out the shapes of the mountains of the Anti-Atlas range.

"Ah, the Sous!" exclaimed the lady who kept the modest canteen on the pass. "There you have the finest corner of Morocco!"

II

The Sous was once an independent kingdom—and its people still give indications that ancient outlooks die hard. They are Berbers of the Shillah group of tribes, and their homeland between the High and Anti-Atlas Mountains has never been far from the Moroccan news. They rebelled against successive sultans with consistent irregularity, and some of the resultant punishments might have daunted a less pugnacious and resilient people. When not engaged in fighting they are noted as good traders, farmers, and artisans.

After a rapid drop from the pass, the road led over a wide plain. The temperature mounted—the Sous stretches out a geographic hand to the Sahara, and occasional winds trespass over the neighbouring territory. Where there is water, much can grow. I passed thousands of orange trees, and one plantation of bananas. Once the Sous grew sugar-cane as its principal crop—when the famous Sultan 'El Mansour', the builder, needed Italian marble for his palace at Marrakesh, he paid for it in sugar, pound for pound. By processes of official folly and

local negligence, the lucrative production was allowed to dwindle and die.

Yet the most remarkable product of the Sous is the argan tree, unknown in any other part of the world. It is rather like an olive, but the oil of its fruit is not edible, and can be used only for lighting. Not edible for human beings, that is to say: but the always-hungry, enterprising and not too dainty goat loves the argan. He nibbles at the lower branches of the rather prickly leaves: when these are exhausted, he climbs the trees to get more. This sounds like an old-time traveller's tale, but a dozen times I saw goats on branches twenty feet above ground: naturally, they cannot grip the trees like monkeys, but any trunk which slopes away from the vertical offers an easy approach to an agile goat.

Noticing signs of an organized water supply, I turned aside to investigate. The French found that a once-fertile land had been allowed to degenerate into a near-desert. The principal blame must be laid on the shoulders of a sultan named Sidi Mohammed Abdullah, who got to be so jealous of the wealth and independent outlook of the Sous that with one stroke of the pen—assuming that he could write!—he closed its port of Agadir, and thus ruined the region. The local resentment was justified, especially as the men of the Sous had been his leading supporters in the battles which won him the throne.

The local rivers are too irregular to provide large-scale irrigation, but French engineers have most ingeniously dug tunnels through the water-bearing strata, and have taken advantage of local configurations to carry water to the surface without pumping. Other areas, not so favourable, are supplied by water pumped from deep wells—I saw one 140 feet deep: however, it contained nearly 100 feet of water. This is supplied to local peasants at a small charge—the French have borne the capital costs of the scheme.

Water is life here: to the peasant, water rights are almost as important as the ownership of land. If your neighbour has water and you have none, you bargain for him to supply you: the price will be very high—30 per cent to 60 per cent of your crop. The Moroccan is not at all sentimental in business matters, and here he is selling a precious commodity.

Taroudant is the capital of the Sous, and reflects the stormy

history of the province. About 10,000 people live within its charming walls of brown earth—at dusk they change from the colour of a Jersey cow to a dark chocolate—but less than a century ago the population was more than 50,000. The region is a popular recruiting ground for labour in France—the local men have a very good reputation as metal workers or miners, and thousands of them emigrate to France. Many of them return, however—sometimes with a French wife. In Morocco native wages are lower than French, but in France the Moroccan gets the standard local pay. Thus he can earn up to 55,000 francs a month. He lives very simply, sends 35,000 francs a month home, and after three or four years comes back to the Sous to buy a farm.

The diminished population of Taroudant means that, although there is one huddle of narrow streets of houses, the walls enclose trees and gardens, a welcome relief. The patio of the hotel which offered me hospitality was a congested mass of green and colour: I was not surprised to learn that the building was once a sultan's palace, and that my room had been occupied by ladies of the harem.

The tourist attractions of Taroudant are not outstanding, but the social amenities offered a useful field for study: here was a good example of a small provincial town. It had a number of elementary schools, and a Central Professional School with 525 pupils, most of them boarders, and some of them French. This specialized in apprenticeship courses in artisan crafts—work in wood and metal, and in most forms of agriculture. Yet another educational effort was more charming. French sisters of the Franciscan Order maintain an orphanage, caring for children who have lost their parents or who have been abandoned by them. The latter class is pathetic indeed, for a baby is seldom abandoned unless there is something seriously wrong with it. The girls are kept and educated until they reach marriageable age, the boys until they can earn their living. It is not uncommon for fellow-orphans to marry later: or, so high is the local reputation of the orphanage, for a youth to come to the Reverend Mother to ask for a wife. She, although following the Moslem custom of veiling the girls, refuses to permit 'blind' marriages. The young people meet in her presence several times before any arrangement is made.

It was time that I visited a local hospital. That at Taroudant had 200 beds—all for Moroccans: French patients had to go to Agadir. Conditions were simple, but for most patients this was the first time they had slept in beds and between sheets. Two French doctors work long hours combating almost every known disease.

"Except most of the major epidemics," said one. "There was a time when typhus and plague periodically decimated the population, but we have mastered them now. It was significant that they returned during the war, when the people had no soap, few clothes, few medical supplies—and therefore plenty of parasites. Since then, D.D.T. has worked minor miracles."

To date there are few Moroccan doctors—a point which will call for comment later. A training school for nurses has, however, been established at Rabat; most of the volunteers are men, who often turn out well. Even those who fail to get their certificate are still employed for minor work, so great is the shortage.

I talked with one of them as we walked through the courts of the hospital—the patients seemed to assume that I was a visiting doctor: fortunately I was not asked to operate, but I was shown into a room where a woman was on the point of delivering a baby.

"I love this marvellous equipment," said the man, bubbling with enthusiasm. "These X-rays—are they not wonderful? And now our people are beginning to believe in them. You know, they used to come to us only when the Moroccan doctors had given them up. Did you ever see our doctors? Sorcerers —medicine men—perhaps those words are better. They sold charms for all ills—things like dried snakes, powdered bones of 'magic' animals, and so on. By the time the patient had exhausted his faith in such things, he was often nearly dead. However, things are changing, fast. The hospital is to be extended. We are even going to build a small wing for Europeans. It is amusing," he chuckled. "Moroccans get their medical treatment free: Europeans have to pay!"

III

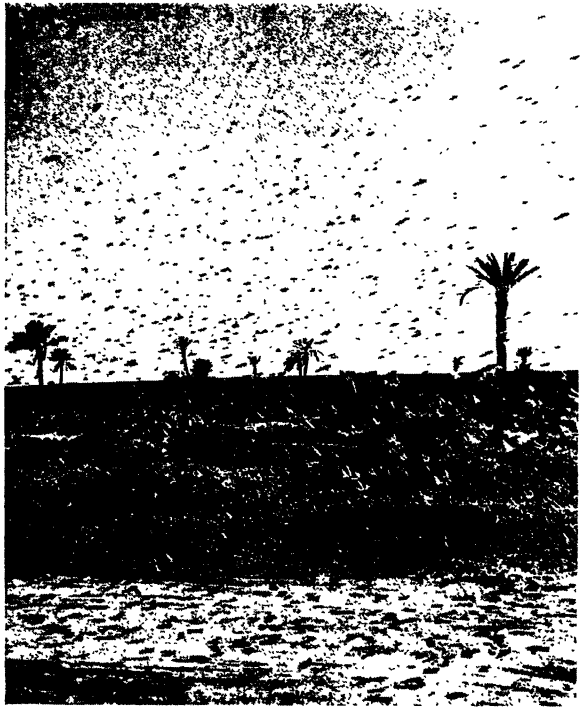
The road to Agadir continued through the Sous plain, the mountains gradually receding to a hazy distance. Agadir itself gave instant warning of a change of character in the region. The coastal towns were subject to European influence—and, often, occupation—long before the interior was surveyed. Thus Agadir in the sixteenth century was a small Portuguese republic! The king of Portugal bought it as a going concern, and proceeded to fortify it. This was a mistake, for it attracted the attention of a Saadian leader, Moulay Mohammed el Harrane. He spurred the men of the Sous into action, captured Agadir after a long siege—and married the daughter of the Portguese commander!

Thus the *kasbah*, magnificently sited on a hill, although of Moroccan construction, betrays European influences. Hugging the coast is a small native medina, but the rest of Agadir is modern concrete. There are even skyscrapers. The population has increased to 25,000, including 10,000 Europeans—a very high proportion. Yet the town and port are expanding rapidly, and a city of 250,000 inhabitants is already envisaged.

The basis of Agadir's prosperity is that humble but popular fish, the sardine. The shoals cruise along the Moroccan coast, apparently oblivious of the fact that their parents made the same journey but did not return. In modern years, it is true, the sardine has strayed somewhat from his accustomed paths, but this has nothing to do with any instinctive reluctance to being caught: he likes cold water, and follows the cool currents wherever they lead. His wanderings have impelled changes among his captors. The Moroccan fisherman liked the sardine because he very considerately came close in to land—and the local men like to have the shore in sight. Now bigger boats are necessary for longer journeys—and the fishermen are having lessons in navigation.

Agadir handles the trade of the Sous, and now has tourist aspirations. I was asked to admire the long beach of fine sand.

"Yes," I agreed. "But to me one beach is like another. Will people come, say, from England to Agadir just to bathe? What can you offer that our own beaches lack?"



22. Plague of locusts

23. The Author on Fringante

24. Partners at the plough

25. Goats climb the argan tree

"We can offer 300 days of sunshine a year—in the summer, months without rain. Is not that something?"

Thinking back on spoiled holidays, I had to admit that it was!

In its modern quarters, a corner of France transferred to Morocco, it is difficult to picture the miserable fishing village which very nearly disturbed the peace of the world in 1911. In July of that year the German gunboat *Panther* appeared in the bay, and the Kaiser Wilhelm II declared that it had come to protect German interests in the Sous. As these scarcely existed, the action was interpreted—correctly—as a jealous German protest against the French pretensions in Morocco. In those days tempers were roused by what would today pass as trivialities. If a foreign warship appeared off a country of interest to Britain, our representative would invite the captain to dinner and suggest a football match between the crew and the local team. But in 1911 Europe seethed with emotion. In France it was assumed that the long-expected war was at hand, but a firm British declaration warned Germany off Morocco. The Kaiser's pride was soothed by the cession of a spit of land in the Cameroons and, as his naval advisers pointed out that the widening of the Kiel Canal would not be complete until 1914, the war was postponed for three years.

IV

The way north from the Sous country lay close to the sea: then plunged into a maze of light green mountains—the colour of the severed end of new-mown hay—speckled with dark green shrubs and bushes. It was difficult to see how anybody could make a living in such country, but apparently it could be done. I do not know if they were offered as samples, but boys by the wayside pressed me to buy (*a*) a fish, (*b*) a hedgehog, (*c*) a small animal of the squirrel family.

Had I been engaged on a tourist journey I would have turned south to Tiznit, a Berber settlement on the edge of the desert. Then, certainly, I would have been tempted further south to Goulimine, to see the Ghedra dancers. They are women, and dance on their knees—they do not move, but their bodies sway in erotic movements. The origin of the peculiar limitations of

the dance is to be found in the low tents of the nomads, where there was no room to stand up.

"The *ghedra,* from which the dance takes its name, is a drum with a frame of earthenware," said a Moroccan friend from the region. "A drummer taps the rhythm with his fingers: others clap in unison. Each girl dances singly. As the drumming becomes more and more animated, the dancer works herself up into a state of ecstasy-fanaticism, if you will. She twists and sways to the rhythm: then she begins to cast off her upper clothing—still remaining on her knees. She completes the dance naked from the waist upwards, save for the jewellery she wears."

"And what does the dance mean?"

"No one knows. It has been passed on from generation to generation, but its origin has been lost. Probably it was once part of a seductive rite—certainly that is the impression you get."

My interest in the southern region had been stimulated by a man I met in the court at Agadir—a 'Blue Man', of Goulimine. I gathered that a century ago the district received a consignment of blue cotton cloth from England. The dye was bad, and the colour ran—and the people were delighted when their skins were stained blue!

"The cloth is not so good these days," the 'Blue Man' said to me, via my local friend. "It comes from France, they say, and the colour does not come off so well. Look!" He opened his capacious *djellabah* at the throat, and it was true that his skin carried only the faintest tinge of blue. So does Progress interfere with local taste!

It is strange that the nomads of the extreme south should favour such adornment, for they are more handsome than their brothers further north. Further, they do not shave their heads as do most Moroccans—and a man must be good-looking indeed to surmount the handicap of a shaven crown. The 'Blue Men' have long, fuzzy hair, like their neighbours the Mauretanians; true, it is seldom well tended, but it gives them an air of distinction emphasized by their well-shaped features.

V

The mountain road suddenly revealed a vista of the sea, with

a white mass on a small promontory. This was Mogador, built by the sultan who desired to ruin Agadir. He applied to the English for an architect, but they recommended a French soldier of architectural fortune named Cornut. He contrived to build what has been adequately described as 'an eighteenth-century fantasy on a Moorish theme'. Its brilliant whiteness is indeed a contrast to the earth-coloured towns further south: it is quite unlike any other place in Morocco—it would fit into Spain admirably: more than once I was reminded of Seville.

Its crenellated walls enclose, not the usual agglomeration of confusion, but straight streets. The houses are higher than the normal, since the space on the promontory is limited, and the side-streets often pass *beneath* them, in a series of tunnels. The population of 20,000 includes 5,000 Jews, an unusually high proportion.

My frequent references to Jews might lead to misunderstanding. There are as wide varieties among the Jewish race as among any other. The Jews of Morocco are old established, and have adopted many local customs—save those, of course, of religion. Only their costume—a long black coat and round black hat—would distinguish them to the casual stranger from the Moroccan. So, in picturing the Jews of Mogador, it is as well to forget Mr. Levy who lives in your suburban street, and whose successful business is reflected in his smart appearance. He differs as much from his co-religionist in Morocco as does an Englishman from a Berber.

There are Jewish communities in every Moroccan town—save one, which we shall encounter later. Some are of long standing: Jews claim to have settled in Morocco after the fall of Jerusalem, or even earlier. They were certainly in Morocco when the Romans arrived. Later their ranks were reinforced by Jews expelled from Spain. There was a time when they were an important part of Moroccan economy, for they understood the financial basis of trade better than their neighbours. Nevertheless, as so often, they were not well treated by many sultans —or their people. Even when not openly persecuted, they were subjected to many restrictions.

Arthur Leared wrote in 1891: "The disqualifications and indignities to which the Jews are subjected in the city of Morocco, so far as they came under my own observation, were

as follows: (1) They are never allowed to wear the turban. (2) In the presence of a governor, or when passing a mosque, they are obliged to remove the blue handkerchief with which the head is at other times bound. (3) They must wear black instead of the yellow shoes always worn by the Moors. (4) When they go from their own quarter into the Moorish town, both men and women are compelled to take off their shoes and walk barefooted; and this degradation appeared especially painful when one had occasion to walk with a Jewish friend through the filthy streets of the Moorish quarters. (5) A Jew, meeting a Moor, must always pass to the left. (6) Jews are not allowed to ride through the city. (7) They are not permitted to carry arms. (8) The use of the Moorish bath is forbidden to the Jews. (9) In the exercise of their religion they are restricted to private houses; hence there are no public buildings used as synagogues. This restriction applies equally to other parts of the empire, except Tangier.

"No doubt there are other more or less annoying interferences with personal liberty which do not meet the eye. But the list given is enough to show that the grievances of the Jewish community are far from being merely sentimental. They live under the yoke of an iron despotism, and, as might be expected, betray this in their manner and appearance."

Small wonder that the Jews are full of suspicion! In few countries could they obtain justice.

"What am I to do?" cried a Jew of Mogador. "One minute I am accused of servility, the next of insolence."

We sat in his house as we talked: it was built in the Arab style, but the furniture was heavy European and over-plentiful: the general effect was disharmonious.

"But there is no persecution now?" I suggested.

"No, not persecution, but—did you hear about the outbreak of plague in Tangier? We were blamed for it, of course. When a doctor pointed out that the plague was carried by rats, then these clever men decided that it was a Jewish rat which had brought the plague to Tangier!"

"But we cannot grumble now," an older man said, gently. "There is no unfairness. We can work, trade, and worship. We have our own schools, our own courts. We get on well with our neighbours. There is little of the Jewish-Arab feud to be

found here. Morocco is the furthest west of the Moslem lands. Most ideas, good or bad, have expended much of their force before they arrive here. No, we cannot grumble. Why, some months ago an English Jew was here with his wife: they were delighted to see the terms on which we live with our Arab neighbours. And he was a knowledgeable man—a senator, I think."[1]

"True, we are no longer confined to the *mellah*," the younger man admitted. "Yet there is still a latent anti-Semitism here. It was noticeable during the Israel-Arab war. I agree that it was not as bad as elsewhere—we were a long way away."

"We always had friends, even in the worst days. Why, even the weak sultan of 1912 protected us against the mob."

"By putting us in the cages of his menagerie!"

"It was a safe place. And his idea was kindly. My own feeling is that most people are friendly if they are but left alone."

VI

I admired the Portuguese fort guarding the harbour of Mogador—for these enterprising mariners held the port for a while. I was told that Orson Welles had used the ramparts as a background for a film—this time 'Othello', not 'The Black Robe'.

Mogador is pleasant, but not especially important; yet its name frequently appears in French records—I recalled the Mogador theatre in Paris. Why? I asked.

"The name became the fashion of the moment. In 1844 Moroccans attacked the French in Algeria. One of the French retaliations was to bombard and occupy Mogador. The expedition was trivial enough—but it was commanded by the Prince de Joinville, son of King Louis-Philippe. So it was slightly romanticized, it is understood, and became fashionable.

[1] He referred to Mr. Maurice Edelman, M.P. for Coventry. Since I have often criticized the unfortunate effects left in foreign countries by visiting M.P.s and others who consider themselves important, I record with great pleasure that I crossed the paths of Mr. and Mrs. Edelman half a dozen times, and found that they had left nothing but happy impressions with all their contacts.

"Incidentally, the French were not by any means the first Europeans to land here. You see that island in the bay? Your own Drake often used it as a base while harrying the Spaniards."

I found later that my informant was not quite accurate. Drake did indeed land on the island, but this was in the early stages of his famous voyage round the world.

Drake was not the only important visitor to Mogador. I noted a plaque on a house, marking it as at one time the residence of the famous Vicomte Charles de Foucauld, the French explorer of Morocco. A young army officer involved in some scandalous love affair, he volunteered for foreign service. Becoming genuinely interested in Arab lore, in 1883 he made an adventurous journey across Morocco, then dangerous for any Christian voyager. For protection, he adopted the disguise of a Jew. He argued that the costume was not conspicuous, that no one would take any notice of a poor Jew, and that the *mellah* would cover astronomical and other observations better than the *medina*.

His calculations were well inspired. He wandered about the country for two years, and his book *Reconnaissance au Maroc* is a classic. Reconnaissance is an apt word, for his writings aroused the French interest which eventually led to the protectorate. They give a vivid picture of the appalling chaos in the Morocco of that time, where disease and slavery were companions of corruption and brigandage.

Later de Foucauld returned to North Africa as one of the Order of the White Fathers, so serving the Arabs and Berbers that they revered him as a *marabout*. However, in one of the periodic disturbances he was murdered by a Saharan tribe in 1916.

"Is there anyone in Mogador who remembers him?" I asked.

"He was here in 1884—that is a long time ago. But let us see."

My friend led me back to the Jewish *mellah*. There he found an aged rabbi, and posed my question.

"I have lived here for nearly eighty years," the old Jew said. "Thus I must have been here when de Foucauld came. I cannot pretend to remember him—I was young, of course—but I do remember my father talking about him later. He

described him as one who loved his fellow-men. There can be no finer testimonial."

Mogador is noted for its marqueterie, and I wandered into the workshops of the Société Co-opérative Artisanale des Marqueteurs de Mogador. The society was formed because standards of work were falling, and today most of the local artisans are members. I found them indignant because cheap imitations of their work are on sale in the *souks*. The real thing is very good indeed: the men work in hard thuya wood, make it up into boxes or items of furniture, then with endless patience inlay traditional designs.

Other men of Mogador hunt the delectable sardine—a habit less sinister than that of their grandfathers, who were pirates of ferocious reputation.

So also were once the sailors of Safi, which is now supreme in the sardine industry. They did tell me the number of fish caught annually, but I fear to quote it lest I should be wrong in the row of noughts. The story of the town's origin was even more interesting—there are few towns in Morocco without a dramatic history. Safi was founded by Canaanites driven out of Palestine by the Hebrew invasion! After Carthaginian and Roman interludes, it received a large influx of Jews fleeing from massacres in Cyrenaica. They converted the local inhabitants —by this time an ethnic medley—to Judaism, to such good effect that they long resisted the Moslem infiltration.

The town suffered from a prevalent Moroccan failing, internecine strife, which made a Portuguese occupation easy. Later, the whim of a sultan ruined the port and transferred its trade to Mogador. Under the French it has recovered. Apart from sardines, its chief fame is its pottery. A number of artisans have emigrated from Fez, and now their quarter is busy indeed.

I chose the cliff road north from Safi: the sight of the green-blue sea was a consoling contrast to the hills, fast parching in the sun—though the valleys were relieved by a profusion of wild flowers. Where the crops had been gathered, ploughing was already in progress—if the rain winds were kind, a rough additional crop of fodder might be snatched. The primitive wooden ploughs were pulled by every variety of animal—pairs of ponies, mules, camels, or donkeys, or an assortment: the most incongruous team consisted of a camel and a donkey.

Yet the donkey is the poor man's friend in Morocco. I would not say that he is ill-treated, but he is hard worked. The hay harvest was in progress, and more than once I saw a small haystack staggering towards me, and only at close range could I make out four sturdy little legs beneath it, and a long-suffering face almost hidden by its overhanging tufts. Other donkeys walked round and round the primitive wells, of the common Mediterranean type, pulling up a continuous series of tins of water for local irrigation. Sometimes a camel deputized, his scornful air making it quite clear that such menial and mechanical work was really beneath his dignity.

I halted at one or two packing stations for tomatoes—some co-operative, some privately owned, and buying produce from local farmers. Production was widespread, the fields being protected from the winds by walls of reed matting. Then, as we sped northwards again, Mohammed gave a shout of excitement: men were working on the road with a steam-roller, and he recognized the gang: it included his brother.

One would have thought that they had been parted for years. The rest of the men selected me for their special welcome: they were just about to have their midday meal, and insisted that we should join them. It was cooked by the roadside, in a pot over a trench fire, and proved to be a very good and solid stew of mutton, potatoes and tomatoes, with small flat loaves of bread. The service was necessarily rough—*diffa* manners prevailed, but I doubt if British roadmakers enjoy a better meal.

Mazagan is another town with an old Portuguese fortress. By this time I was scarcely surprised when a boy informed me that Orson Welles used it as the scene for his film 'Othello': and he then proposed to charge me 20 francs for this item of information. Mr. Welles must certainly know his Morocco —and his choices were good.

The Portuguese managed to hold Mazagan, unlike the other towns along the coast, for 267 years. At last, under incessant attacks, they decided to evacuate it. One man remained behind to explode mines after the Moors had occupied the town. No one could tell me what his fate was, but doubtless the Portuguese gave his widow an adequate pension.

For years the town was deserted. Then a colony of Jews

asked permission to occupy it: their descendants live within its strong walls today.

Now Mohammed had begun to return to his old habits—for once with some reason, for Casablanca, his home town, lay ahead. The city was an astonishing spectacle when viewed from the surrounding heights. Nearly all Moorish towns are crowded within their ancient walls, but Casablanca sprawls over square miles of ground, and its expansion is by no means complete. It seems quite out of place in Morocco. It rather resembles a Frenchman's idea of Chicago, complete with sky-scrapers and Galeries Lafayette.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

WHITE HOUSE

I

CASABLANCA it is, as white as a house can be; yet Casanova would be just as appropriate—the reference being, not to any suggestion of the libertine, but to the newness of its aspect. The Portuguese, who occupied what was already an ancient port, called it Casa Branca. However, today everybody calls it simply 'Casa'.

The French occupied the place in 1907—it was then a tiny fishing port of 5,000 inhabitants. For some years the French had been 'nibbling' at the Moroccan coast, until at last a French company secured a concession to build a harbour at Casablanca. In one of the many anti-foreign outbursts a number of European workmen were killed. French warships opened fire, and troops were landed. Their authority soon extended into the surrounding country—at the time, that of the sultan scarcely existed. Since then its progress has been rapid. It is probably the finest city in North Africa—and the largest, with a population of over 700,000 and still increasing. It houses over 75 per cent of all the industry of Morocco, and occupies one-third of the country's entire urban area. As can be imagined, it has not escaped the troubles apparently inherent to mushroom growth.

It was proper to examine the docks first. There were few natural advantages save plenty of water; the harbour had to be wrested from the sea, and the city erected on a sandy shore. By every modern standard it is a fine achievement. The port is extremely busy, and when I noticed a dozen ships waiting for berths I was told that this was comparatively a slack day. The equipment is first-class, and the grain silos immense.

I talked with several of the dockers: as in England, they seemed to be a tribe apart from the other workers. By general Moroccan standards, their wages were good—450 francs for a

nine-hour day, with overtime rates up to 100 per cent. A docker working a twelve-hour day earns 914 francs. To these were added amenities such as children's allowances (50 francs a day), paid holidays, pensions, sickness and accident benefits. The foremen and mechanics on the permanent staff are eligible for higher posts, and earn up to 1,000 francs a day. To the Moroccan this is big money.

The controlling staff were enthusiastic about the growth of the port. Naturally, each officer believed his own section more important than the others. A Security Officer, a Moroccan, almost bubbled over with delight.

"As in most docks, we had a lot of petty thefts, but last year the number of cases dropped to 600—from an average of 5,000."

"How did you do it? More police?"

"No. Stricter laws. In the town, if you steal a kilo of sugar, you will be sent to gaol for eight days. If you do it in the port—six months!"

I promised to keep my hands off his sugar, which seemed excessively expensive at such a price.

Then I wandered over to a school for seamen. At present it improvises in a hangar, but new premises are promised. A hundred and fifty men and youths were in training. When they entered the school, most had first to be taught to read and write. Afterwards they moved on to a four-year course on the study of engines, radio, navigation and other complicated subjects. The school was very practical, and its equipment included two fishing boats for experimental voyages.

The real sponsor of the scheme was the humble sardine, with his recent vagaries. These were accepted by the local fisherman as the will of Allah: he put out in his boat to the usual fishing-grounds: then, if the fish were not there, he went home again. Now he is being taught to go after the sardine—even out of sight of land.

The sardine likes cold water, and follows its currents even to a depth of ten metres. When the fishermen were first told that deep fishing would be fruitful, they doubted the radiosondes and radar which had identified the shoals. But when the foremost boat dropped its nets and hauled up a catch of twenty-five tons, they began to believe in the new magic. Now a pilot boat

explores the seas, and calls the fishing boats to the exact place where the fish have been traced.

It seemed logical to pass on to the factory where the sardines were canned: and thence to the factory where the tins were made. This had specially modern and ingenious machinery. One thing was noticeable: all the operatives were men, while in Europe, for such light tasks, women would have been employed.

After a call at a huge cement works, I went on to a sugar factory—after a spell in the countryside, or *bled*, it was only proper to spend a few days in industry. The Moroccans are very fond of sugar, and in all the provincial *souks* I had seen the blue-papered sugar cones on sale. Here again the workers were men, apparently not at all displeased with repetition jobs, and packing the sugar with an adept neatness which women could not have surpassed. This also applied to the processes in the huge tobacco factory. All impelled enquiries on working and other conditions: and all proved that the Moroccan, despite all rumours to the contrary, can work steadily and efficiently.

"Our greatest fault is a lack of ambition," said a local foreman. "We are satisfied with too little. The more we get, the less we are inclined to work. This makes things awkward. I think it comes from the Arab in us."

He may have been right. The European works for food, clothing and shelter, and is readily induced to work harder by the prospect of minor luxuries. To the Arab the greatest luxury is time to spare—ample leisure is the sign of nobility. I did not envy Moroccan trade union organizers!

II

To date, trade unionism in Morocco has been a comparatively feeble growth. The French have not encouraged it. Urging—probably with reason—that local trade unions would immediately become the catspaw of politics, they permitted Moroccan workers to join branches only of French unions. This policy was not very inspired, since many of the French unions are Communist-dominated! Yet the other reason for the slowness in the development of the unions is probably more important—the comparative lack of corporate sense among the Moroccans. A man who is

intensely loyal to his tribe has no such sense of kinship towards the men who share his work. Further, he knows that if he strikes there are a dozen men in the countryside who are ready to take his job—men who have never heard of a trade union.

So far only about 40,000 Moroccans are union members. The Nationalists place full trade union freedom as one of their fundamental demands: at the moment, however, they are restrained by the Communist leadership of most of the organizations—they realize that any association with Communists, however unsought, will have a deterrent effect on their own objectives. To date, they claim, they have been able to maintain their own dominance—it was certainly significant that the Communist-inspired 'peace campaign' was a complete failure in Morocco. At the same time many workers believe that the Communists are the best bargainers on wage claims. The truth may be that neither the Communists nor the Nationalists have anything like the hold over the trade unions which they claim: the communal sense takes time to develop, and at the moment the natural individualistic outlook is more noticeable.

The situation is also influenced by another aspect, that of tribal loyalty. Industrial labour is drawn from the villages —but the ambition of most of the men is to return home. The more they are paid, the sooner they leave. In some of the mines, for example, wages are deliberately kept low for the first three months so as to persuade men to stay longer. Even then, it is quite common for a man to return to his village after six months' work—and to come back to the mine when he is hard up, or when a drought has impoverished the countryside: at all events, he will return home for the harvest and the religious feasts.

One item interested me as an indication of the power of tribal loyalties—and as a commentary on the difficulties of labour organization. One mining company built a *medina*, or native town, for their employees. It was a failure: there were frequent quarrels, and the 'wastage' of the labour force was considerable. Then, taking the advice of a Moroccan, they built ten small villages, with ample space for cultivation, and allocated each village to the families of the same tribe. This was a great success: the family associations and the availability of cultivable ground cut down the rate of 'desertion' to modest dimensions.

As I have said, 40,000 Moroccans—out of an industrial labour force of 140,000—have joined trade unions. I expect this figure to increase. In the near future, it seems certain, there will be heated argument about Moroccan wages, which average about half the European figure for the same type of work. It may be true that the Moroccan is often a less efficient worker, but he has to face the same high cost of living.

The minimum rate of pay for unskilled workers is 45 francs an hour—less than a shilling. The more enlightened firms pay more. In the sugar factory, for example, the unskilled rate of pay was 60 francs, rising to 100 francs for semi-skilled work. Special inducements were offered for increased production. One interesting feature here was the encouragement of workers to better themselves. There were special training courses for advancement—and Moroccans who attained grades from foremen upwards were paid at European rates.

Pay in the tobacco factory was higher still—probably the best in Morocco. The social services were also good—medical and insurance facilities and, above all, housing schemes. Some of the services might appear strange to European eyes. In the tin can factory the most popular service was that of a local Moslem adviser of some standing, who investigated private difficulties of the staff. Where necessary, he sent his clients to the pasha, with his card. This, it was believed, obviated the necessity for carrying a money gift! And while a British firm might reward especially good service by the gift of Cup Final tickets, the sugar factory selected five workmen a year and paid their expenses on a pilgrimage to Mecca!

"But our greatest difficulty remains the lack of ambition," a factory manager declared. "We *want* Moroccans in higher grades, but it is not easy to interest them in long-term plans. We established night schools to give opportunities for improvement, but very few men were interested. Even the more intelligent seem to prefer to work with their hands rather than their brains."

"Did you ever try direct recruitment for the educated ranks?"

"Yes, but with little success. The few we got turned out very well, but most educated Moroccans prefer the financial opportunities of commerce to a fixed salary. And even in modern Morocco you are never far away from old usages. A few weeks

ago a young man came to see me—a cadet of one of the leading families of the city. He explained that he had decided to go into industry. I was delighted, and offered him a job on the spot, at a European salary. But he explained that this was quite useless to him—he had to maintain not only his wives, but a number of family retainers and the like. In all, he was responsible for the support of nearly eighty people! I think you will understand that I was quite unable to offer him an economic salary!"

The frankest comments on his own people came from a Moroccan foreman.

"It's simply that their ideas haven't moved forward with industrial conditions," he said. "They haven't yet got the idea of regular work—it isn't in their tradition. If they lose their jobs by inefficiency—well, Allah will provide. The more they get on, the less they want to work. They think that they are skilled workers when they can watch a machine. But it is the French who have to repair the machine!"

The first factories I saw were the best. Nevertheless, most had the beginnings of decent conditions. Since industry is not covered by Koranic law, the French have been able to introduce regulations concerning safety devices, hygiene, and the like.

"Yes, you are right to talk of beginnings," a French manufacturer was unusually frank. "Nevertheless, we have to admit that very few factory owners are as yet socially minded. They trade on the fact that their employees don't expect them to be —wouldn't believe it if they were! So their usual objective is to get as much as they can for as little. Maybe that outlook isn't unknown in other countries, but here it is encouraged by low living standards, accepted without protest—so far. The social conscience of the West is missing among employers and employed.

"And, I should add, among the *Moroccan* employers. You have seen some very good French factories. I will now take you to some bad ones, and some very bad. You will find that although some French employers are bad, nearly all Moroccan employers are worse."

He was right.

III

My visits to the superior factories had included an examination of housing facilities. When a city increases its population from 5,000 to 700,000 in forty years, a housing crisis must be expected. Further, there was little planning during this abrupt expansion. Especially in times of drought, peasants heard of the new and—to them—fantastic wages to be earned, and flocked to the cities. In a matter of a few months, therefore, a hundred thousand people would arrive at Casablanca—not because an appeal had been made for labour, but because farming conditions were bad.

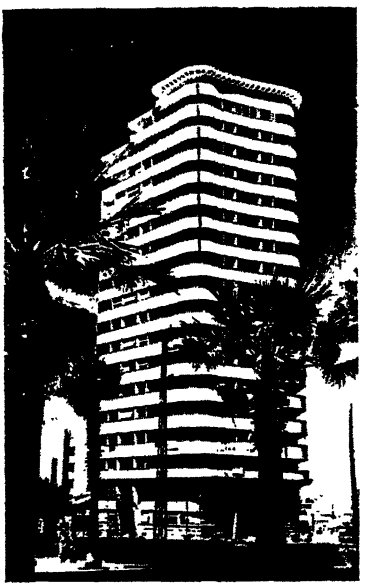
No city in the world could have coped with such a problem. Forty years ago Casablanca adopted a town planning scheme. A European city was built some distance from the native *medina*. But the latter overflowed its walls, and the intervening space was built up. The French therefore designed a new *medina*. The idea was good, but its implementation was left to speculators —mostly Moroccan. Thus the new *medina* is almost as congested as the old.

Even this did not solve the problem. The largest building scheme could not cope with the effects of the famine of 1945. Tens of thousands of Moroccans and Jews came crowding in from the countryside. Overcrowding was rife, and prices became fantastic. I have said that, save in their tribal organization, the community sense of the Moroccans is small. Despite Koranic teaching, many have no great pity for their fellows in economic distress: they seldom give something for nothing—nor do they expect it. An English hitch-hiker optimistically points his thumb as a car approaches: a Moroccan hitch-hiker waves a hundred-franc note.

Thus there were plenty of people who cashed in on an unprecedented situation. The price of a single room soared to four or five thousand francs a month. Then some desperate Moroccan reverted to an older type of residence. Outside the city he built a shack: it was similar to the one he had inhabited in his village, except that the usual building materials were not available. However, the American army in its war-time march across Morocco had left in its trail tens of thousands of *bidons* (petrol

26. Corner of a *bidonville*

27. Village *Souk* beyond the Atlas



Modern Casablanca

28. —European

29. —and Moroccan

30. Rural *Tertib*

31. Irrigation

cans). He flattened out a few dozen of these and used them for his walls and roof. Others followed his ingenious example. The Moroccan owners of the ground rushed to cash in on the new boom, and themselves began to build *bidonvilles* on a large scale. They found ready tenants for the shacks at 250 francs a month.

Today, nearly every Moroccan city has its *bidonvilles*, but those of Casablanca are the biggest and the worst. In one I found more than 50,000 people on a site of 130 acres. The shacks resembled those erected by an impecunious English pig or poultry keeper. They were huddled together on the sides of narrow lanes. Sanitation did not exist, and water was carried from afar.

The spectacle was appalling. True, living conditions in some of the Moroccan villages are primitive enough, but at least these have space. Town planning experts might like to sit back and consider a population of 400 to the acre! My first glimpse gave me a profound shock: I thought of the disease which such conditions must make inevitable.

Yet, as I walked around, the people seemed healthy enough—the children especially so. What is more, they seemed happy, and well fed. Constant questioning confirmed that this was no optical illusion so, puzzled, I sought out an experienced medical officer of health.

"You are quite right," he said. "By the book of rules, the *bidonvilles* should be the haunts of every known disease—epidemics, especially. In actual fact, they are healthier than the old *medina*."

"That seems incredible."

"I know, but it is so. There is far less T.B., for example."

"Why?"

"There is one economic reason. As the people in the *bidonvilles* pay such small rents, they have more money to spend on food. You may have noticed that they are better fed? And even in these one-storey shacks they have at least sun and air—two valuable necessities often lacking in the narrow streets of the *medina*—which is even more crowded than the *bidonvilles*.

"It is as well to look on these places, not as the beginning of the town, but as the end of the country. And, when you think of it, conditions are better in the *bidonvilles* than in many

villages, save for the conglomeration of the huts—which the Moroccans do not dislike. We have at least been able to introduce such amenities as garbage collection, water from public fountains, and the like. And even the tin shacks are drier than the nomad tents!

"Further, a fair proportion of the occupants look upon their sojourn here as temporary. They want to earn enough money to go home and buy a farm. That is, they live in the simplest style possible. The Moroccans are a very clean people—you will be surprised if you go into the shanties. This, with the other factors I mentioned, has helped to keep down diseases. Have another look—you may be surprised."

I walked around again, and had to admit that his argument was well based. Very few people wanted to move: houses were doubtless very nice, but you had to pay for them. Running water was a luxury—a man's wife could carry all he needed.

Nevertheless, it was quite obvious that the *bidonvilles* cannot be allowed to persist. In the town hall I had noticed an office of 'urbanism', and borrowed one of its experts.

"As you say, it is a problem," he agreed. "Even if the population remained static, we need 50,000 new houses. And, even if no more workers came here, the birthrate is high—especially among the Jews. However, we have begun—let us go and see."

The first to approach the problem were the more enlightened factories. They built *cités* for their workers, on what would pass in Morocco for garden city lines. Each *cité* followed the traditional method, and was complete within its own walls—with mosque, shops, health services, gateway and guard. The houses were in the local style—two or three rooms about a courtyard. Some factories provided a house free, others charged a modest rent.

Yet these admirable schemes touched only the fringe of the problem. The bulk had to be faced by the local authority. This operated under great difficulty, for during and immediately after the war there was a great shortage of building materials. Now new schemes are under way, and it is estimated that the worst of the *bidonvilles* can be cleared in three years, the whole in ten.

Practically all the relief measures have been made by the French, but I found one scheme operated by a Moroccan. True,

the French had made him a substantial loan for the purpose because, surprisingly, he had no thought for personal profit. He was fabricating building materials on the spot, and constructing simple houses of one to three rooms, with a small courtyard, kitchen, and lavatory: these were being let at from 1,500 to 2,500 francs per month. If a hundred people would follow his example, the problem would soon be reduced to manageable proportions: so far, however, the rich Moroccans have stood aloof—and they include a dozen men who are now in the millionaire class as a result of ground deals alone.

The best French effort is in the suburb of Ain Chok. The new estate is State property: it consists of hundreds of dwellings at the same rents, nicely laid out, and with unusual facilities: there are, for example, schools for all—a condition not prevailing elsewhere in Morocco. The French have also built and presented to the estate what must be the largest mosque in North Africa.

I saw the beginnings of a new scheme near the worst of the *bidonvilles*—some camels were watching the bulldozer which hacked out the channels for the drains. The idea is to run up simple prefabricated buildings on one half of the site, passing their occupants on to permanent houses as soon as they are available. At least the cost is not excessive. A house in the traditional Moorish pattern costs from £280 (with one living-room) to £400 (with three). The rents, as stated, range from 30s. to 50s. a month, but occupiers are encouraged to become owners—the State advances loans to them at 4 per cent (or, to ex-soldiers, 2 per cent) repayable over ten or fifteen years.

Eventually the *bidonvilles* will be destroyed and the sites used for proper housing. "With a difference!" said the urbanist. "The site which now houses fifty people will then only suffice for five."

The Moroccans do not take readily to large blocks of flats, but the Jews do, and they have an estate to themselves, designed to their own ideas. New estates of European houses are also in hand, but here again there are vast arrears, and the housing shortage is acute.

The French were badly 'caught short' by the mushroom expansion of Casablanca: nor must the difficulties of the war years be overlooked. Certainly the outlook today is far-sighted. A town-planning scheme has been adopted, covering several

miles along the coastal plain towards Fedala. There will be 'satellite' towns around new industries, with every facility—including green zones and a motor road. A great deal of the land has already been bought as an insurance against speculation.

"Come back in five years," said the Moroccan who was doing so well. "And always remember that you must not judge Africa by European standards."

This, however, is precisely what Casablanca invites. When you see modern concrete skyscrapers alongside tin shanties, you cannot help but notice the shanties.

IV

The Nationalist propaganda is especially critical of the Moroccan health services. For this reason I had been watching French activities during my wanderings. Casablanca offered an opportunity for a more thorough discussion.

Pride of the local service is a new hospital which would be welcomed in any city in the world. Not merely is the building fine and suitable for its purpose, but its equipment is up-to-date to the last degree.

The general scheme in Casablanca—as in other large cities—is based on a series of local dispensaries, or clinics, scattered about the native quarters. These receive patients from the more numerous consultation centres—the equivalent of our general practitioners: in Morocco, however, so acute is the shortage of doctors that they are sometimes staffed by nurses. Simple injuries and ailments are dealt with on the spot, and other cases are passed on to the clinics. These in turn deal with most patients, but three hospitals are available for the more serious cases.

"Things are getting better," said a French doctor. "At first it was difficult to attract patients—they came to us only after they had exhausted the resources of their own medicine men—you have seen these? Even now, many women prefer the native midwives. If you can stand it, I will introduce you to one of these ladies who has joined us and has been trained in modern methods. But she can still describe the old ones!"

It is very difficult for a European to appreciate the North

African mind. I met one Moroccan who prided himself on his modernity, and who always wore European clothes—but who condemned his wife to confinement by the old, primitive practices.

At the end of my journey I was able to put together a wide range of notes on health conditions. Before 1912 Morocco was subject to shocking pestilences: cholera and plague killed people by the hundred thousand. When the anti-malaria service was inaugurated, it found 1,500,000 cases in the Atlantic plain alone.

Actually, French doctors had begun to work in Morocco before the protectorate was established. With the new authority, novel enterprises began. Early successes came to mobile sanitary units, or 'dispensaries on wheels'. They not only identified infections, but provided inoculations against them. A new hygiene service declared war on insect parasites: in this the Moroccans willingly collaborated, for they are not to be numbered among the people who are happy with 'companions'.

Plague and cholera are now entirely under control; malaria has been greatly reduced, and the fight continues intensively. A sterner task is the prevention of tuberculosis, which is endemic in the crowded living conditions of the *medinas*; X-ray examinations and animal inoculations have, however, reduced the scourge to manageable proportions. The widespread ocular diseases have also been tackled successfully, but syphilis is still rampant.

The medical staff includes 250 full-time doctors, while the hospitals and dispensaries have part-time services of another 120. In addition, there are chemists, health officers, welfare workers, and nearly 3,000 nurses and other assistants. The annual number of consultations exceeds 13 million—all but 300,000 to Moroccans.

Today the organization is widespread—even to ambulances for bringing in patients from desert regions. There are 270 consulting rooms, 29 dispensaries, 73 local infirmaries, 20 mobile sanitary groups, and 27 general hospitals, and 13 hospitals specializing in virulent diseases. More in all categories are being built. Add to these nursing schools, sanatoria and research stations, and the basis of the organization is complete—it can be greatly extended when more money and personnel are available.

Hitherto, the reluctance of Moroccans to enter medical ser-

vice has been very disappointing. Low educational standards have perhaps been responsible—obviously a man must reach matriculation standard before he can consider a medical career. The idea of seven years' further study appals most Moroccans—they can make good money in commerce with a very much shorter apprenticeship. Even when they can be persuaded—and, when qualified, they are very good indeed—their inherent ideas assert themselves. They do not want to enter the public service—especially when it entails work in a country district: they prefer a much more lucrative private practice in the towns. Of the fifteen Moroccan doctors qualified to date, only four have opted for public service.

"This is a real problem," said one of the four. "At long last our young people are realizing that we *must* staff our own services, and at present about a hundred of our people are training in France. But if they merely come back and set up privately in the towns, we gain nothing. Most towns already have enough doctors—the real need is in the *bled*. Maybe we shall have to adopt the Iranian pattern. There they had exactly the same problem, but now a young doctor *has* to serve a number of years in the country before settling in towns."

Local outlook and inherited ideas affect every aspect of medical care. Naturally, each hospital builds up a 'blood bank', for emergencies. So far 95 per cent of the blood donors have been Europeans—the Moroccans believe that the process not only weakens them but lessens their virility. (I seemed to sense a case for an alliance between the hospitals and the local barbers!) Further, they dislike the infusion of non-Moslem blood! Such things do not ease the doctor's task. The word 'patient' is generally if erroneously applied to the sufferer: in Morocco the doctor is certainly better qualified for the designation.

Preventive and curative medical science is allied to social work. Pre-natal clinics and children's health centres do not confine their attention to medical examinations. In the dispensaries of Fez I noticed one surprising development. Moroccan women of good family were being taught to sew and knit! Normally men are the tailors and dressmakers, and French girls have to teach these women to thread needles! Classes in babycraft were very practical—and were becoming popular.

Welfare services, assistance to aged persons and orphans, are

a joint responsibility of the State and the Moslem charitable societies. A great deal remains to be done, but the foundations are sound enough.

Social services are now accepted as part of the normal machinery of a modern state, but some fervent Moslems believe that official schemes of this kind are quite wrong. Does not the Koran exhort the faithful to be kind to those worse off than themselves—and especially to succour sick and aged relatives?

This religious obligation is often practised—probably to a greater degree than among Christian peoples. Yet it leaves pitiful gaps, especially in the new cities, where the patriarchal attitude of the local leader or the social community of the tribe is usually missing. What is often decried in the villages may be fervently demanded in the cities.

Certainly health and hygiene have made great advances in the last forty years—reflected in the rise in the population, which has more than doubled.

"Once the initial suspicion has been overcome, the people collaborate with us loyally," said a doctor. "After all, they can see the results. And they are very grateful. In fact, the only folks who are not grateful for our medical achievements seem to be some of the Nationalist leaders."

I turned up the pamphlet which I carried with me. It criticized the French severely because hospital facilities for Europeans are much better than those for Moroccans. This is true: but no mention is made of the fact that until the coming of the French local health services scarcely existed at all.[1]

[1] "It is the dirtiest, most tumble-down place ever seen. Some of the Consulates are substantial buildings, but most of the other houses are in bad repair. There are also many waste spaces. Of these not a few are covered with reed huts, in bad repair, in which, when we saw them, many Arabs, wretchedly poor, were encamped. The streets and open spaces were covered with fetid pools of stagnant water and in these, as elsewhere, was every species of abominable filth. The wonder, altogether, was how people could exist in such a place; and, as might be expected, the public health was at a low ebb. The population is about 4,000, of which a large portion are native Jews, and about a hundred are Europeans. Remittent fever had greatly prevailed, and the mortality among the Jews, in connection with whom the number had been alone ascertained, had for some time been at the rate of ten and twelve daily. Some Europeans had also died, and one of our passengers from Tangier was a priest belonging to the Spanish Mission, sent by that religious body to fill up a vacancy. The worst climate on the African coast could hardly show a higher rate of mortality." A description of Casablanca in 1908, from *Mulai Hafid at Fez*, by Lawrence Harris.

One figure attracted my attention. "The authorities never disclose the terrible mortality rate among the natives, especially among the children. The rate of native child-mortality is 283·6 per 1,000, or the highest in the world, whereas among French children in Morocco it amounts to 84·1."

The exactness of the figure of 283·6 was remarkable, for Morocco has no vital statistics.[1] It therefore demanded investigation. No Nationalist leader was able to explain how it had been arrived at, nor could the French authorities at Rabat—who showed no reluctance whatever to 'disclose' mortality rates: indeed, all available statistics are freely published.

The loose organization, especially in the *bled*, means that there are no formal records of birth, marriages and deaths. This does not apply to the European population—incidentally, the infantile mortality rate in this is 63 per 1,000, not 84·1. However, it has recently been possible to make cross-section estimates. In all the principal towns a record was made of the first 1,000 babies born in 1951: exactly a year later health visitors made enquiries as to their welfare. This check showed that the mortality among Moroccan children averaged 129 per 1,000. The figure for Jewish children, who are generally better tended, ranged from 93 to 115. These figures cannot be taken as exact, of course, but they do suggest that the figure of 283·6—or 386!—is far too high. Further, the rate of infant mortality among Moroccan babies is due in no small degree to adherence to local primitive methods of accouchement.

The claim that Moroccan conditions are the worst in the world is easily discounted by the most casual observation. In Nationalist circles I found to my surprise that Egypt was accepted as a Moslem country which provided a model for all others, since it had full control of its own internal affairs. At the time of my journey in Morocco a mission of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research issued a report—studiously avoided by the Moroccan Nationalist press. It revealed, on a cross-section examination, that 92 per cent of the Egyptians were affected by bilharziasis or amoebic dysentery: 64 per cent by intestinal worms, and 6 per cent by syphilis. Six per cent were

[1] In a letter to *The Listener* (April 21st, 1952), gratefully quoted in the Nationalist newspapers, Mr. Rom Landau—who appears to have become the leading Istiqlal apologist in England—advanced the figure to 386.

blind or suffering from eye maladies, chiefly trachoma, while 12 per cent of families were living on bread eked out with skimmed milk and cheese. More than half had fresh vegetables only once a week. In one centre one doctor was trying to treat single-handed 27,000 patients.

The incomes of 5 per cent of all the Egyptian families did not exceed 15s. a month: 61 per cent were paid between 15s. and 75s., and the rest up to 150s. a month. More than half the children born died before reaching the age of five. The average length of life was between 15 and 20 years.

Health conditions in the typical Egyptian villages were found to be "the worst in the civilized world. Of a total of 106 points the Egyptian village attained 23·25, the same as the over-populated and epidemic stricken villages of China and India. The vast majority of the villagers of Egypt are working for wealthy pashas and landowner politicians under the conditions of vilest misery."

The most biased observer could never apply the picture of the Egyptian 'model' to the Moroccan scene: it might have been true fifty years ago, but it is a fantasy today. In the absence of vital statistics, accurate comparisons are impossible, but cross-section examinations do illustrate trends. In the principal towns of Morocco, for example, the general death rate in 1930-1 was 32 per 1,000: by 1947-8 it had been reduced to 22 per 1,000.

I met no French doctor who was satisfied with the progress made—all regarded it as no more than a good beginning. More money, more medical staff, and above all more Moroccan co-operation are needed. Yet population figures are a fair commentary on health services. In 1921 the population of Morocco was 3,533,800: by 1947 it had increased to 8,617,400—and is still rising rapidly.

V

In one respect I found myself in general agreement with my Nationalist friends: the legal system of Morocco needs an urgent overhaul.

We have noted that the French, on their entry into Morocco, adopted as many as possible of the local systems, merely amend-

ing them with a view to their reform. This may have been the easiest policy at the time—though even this argument is debatable. The chaos in Morocco in 1912 was so complete that the French could probably have introduced drastic measures with the same facility as partial adaptations. In particular, the local administration of justice screamed aloud for complete revision.

The word 'justice' is indeed a misnomer. Bribery was the general rule: there was no hope of a judgment unless the 'present' was substantial—this weighted the scales overwhelmingly in favour of the wealthy client. Every feudal chief had his own prison, and most employed tortures of medieval types. The Koran was the source of all law—a system of jurisprudence adapted to the life and habits of the Arabian tribes in the seventh century. It has many good features, but these were utterly vitiated by the universal corruption.[1]

Thinking that the policy would be more readily accepted, the French based their judicial system on the old foundations. We have seen the pasha in the town, or the caid in the country, selected by the Sultan from the French 'short list', usually after suitable financial negotiations, and 'assisted' in the courts by a French officer. The latter's powers were limited. He could give advice if called upon to do so, but otherwise he could only reserve what he considered to be a bad judgment for an appeal to the Supreme Court at Rabat.

In practice, the system worked well enough in criminal cases. Then the pasha or caid acts virtually as a magistrate, having jurisdiction over cases involving punishments up to two years' imprisonment—all others go to Rabat. No great knowledge of law is necessary: common sense is enough to give a decision on a man's guilt, and the French officer can ensure fair conditions of prosecution and defence.

I spent a day in the new Mahakma, or Law Courts, at Casablanca. The building is new and sumptuous: designed by a French architect, the decoration is by local craftsmen, and the result is magnificent. True, I heard many complaints that the

[1] "What justice can be looked for in a country in which, with a single exception, that of the administration of customs, no official, whether he be judicial or administrative, is paid, except it may be in a nominal way, by the State? for the judges must be corrupt, and the governors and other people in authority speculative and extortionate, in order to exist." From *Morocco and the Moors*, by Arthur Leared, 1891.

money spent on it would have been better employed in building houses—an argument not without force in Casablanca: yet an authority meanly housed is apt to be meanly estimated, and the task of securing respect for the law is by no means complete.

The pasha of Casablanca is in charge of the Mahakma. He is a son of El Mokri, for long Grand Vizier of Morocco, and a brother-in-law of the Glaoui of Marrakesh. He himself sits only once a fortnight: for the rest, khalifas deputize for him.

The khalifa in the criminal court was his nephew. The public section of the court was well filled, and though the procedure looked casual it seemed to be thorough enough. Prisoners and witnesses stood in a row facing the khalifa and his French colleague: lawyers wandered about in American rather than English fashion. The first case was one of bicycle thieving: the two accused were skilfully defended by a Moroccan lawyer, who argued that it was a case, not of theft, but of false pretences, and should thus be transferred to the civil court. His argument failed, however, and the two men received sentences of three months' imprisonment.

Next followed a series of prostitutes, accused of soliciting outside the 'prostitutes' city', or reserved quarter. First offenders were sentenced to 15 days' imprisonment, habituals up to six months.

Save for the different conditions, the proceedings were not unlike those in an English police court, save that most cases were lengthier. I moved over to the civil courts. In two of these a khalifa sat with a French *adjoint*: in the third, of greater importance, the khalifa was assisted by a French law officer and by two 'career' or trained professional judges. This is a new and very important development. Hitherto khalifas, like pashas and caids, have been chosen on family or political qualifications: now professional judges are being trained. Most of the lawyers in this court were French, and debate was lively.

Cases involving Europeans are tried in French courts under French law. Nor do the courts of the pashas and caids try all civil cases: as I have previously indicated, those which fall within the Koranic law are tried by *cadis*. These officers are appointed direct by the Sultan, with no French interference. Their courts are usually held in or near mosques. All cases of

inheritance or marriage disputes are referred to them—save in the Berber regions, where the tribal council or *djemaa* takes their place.

In Britain it is held as a principle that justice should not merely be done, but should palpably and clearly be seen to be done. It cannot be claimed that this idea prevails in Morocco. Even if it did, it would be difficult to persuade the local people that it did. Whenever I mentioned the courts to a Moroccan, he rubbed his fingers together suggestively, indicating corruption.

Alas, although often exaggerated, the suspicion is only too well founded. Old traditions die hard, and the practice of 'gifts' to men in authority, from the Sultan downwards, is too deep-rooted to be eradicated in a generation. As I wandered around the cells at Casablanca, the warder told me of the unhappy experience of a colleague, who had charged 300 francs each to relatives who wished to see a convicted prisoner—and had been caught. In the courts were rooms where secretaries were available to assist illiterates—and others!—in filling up legal forms. Their aid was free, but no client could be persuaded to believe that he was offered a service for nothing, and the system began to develop into a racket. Now a poster has been affixed in each room, forbidding the secretaries to accept fees. It was significant that the poster was issued and exhibited by the French officer, *not* by the pasha.

"That is our biggest difficulty—the fact that corruption is accepted as a matter of course," said a French law officer. "Recently a man came to me with a complaint. 'I gave 50,000 francs to the judge,' he said, 'but he decided against me!' Nor was he comforted when I told him that in France he would have gone to jail for two years for attempting to corrupt a judge."

"But in this case the judge *was* corrupt—even if eventually he gave a fair decision."

"Yes. That is the trouble. You can change physical conditions rapidly, but it takes a long time to change the ideas of men. But they *are* changing—conditions are better than they were."

The old tradition of corruption dies hard. Not until a new generation of professional judges has been trained will it be

possible to replace the present office-holders, and this process cannot be rapid. Moroccan Nationalists grumble at the French *adjoints*, yet but for these officers the local justice would be that of the sixteenth century rather than of the twentieth.

Nor is the present system of justice aided by the low payments made to pashas and caids—and, by inference, to their khalifas. Most payments are made on the basis of a percentage of the taxes handled—a method scarcely calculated to repress corruption!

There is another fundamental failing to this system. The pasha or caid is the titular head, not only of the process of justice, but of the police force. In effect, therefore, he is often prosecutor and judge: this is obviously quite wrong.

The French have at last recognized this. Four years ago they proposed a new code of justice to the Sultan. Under this, the pasha or caid would retain his executive powers as governor, but would cease to be a judge. To date the Sultan has resisted the proposals. He argues that he is the final guarantee of the rights of his people. He has a controlling power, even if modified by French influence, over pashas and caids, but would have little or none over the new courts which the French propose. He objects especially to the proposal that French officers should still sit beside even career Moroccan judges.

There, unfortunately, the matter rests. It cannot do so indefinitely. The French are anxious for reforms: so are all thoughtful Moroccans of nearly every shade of political opinion. It ought not to be impossible to work out at least the beginning of agreement.

VI

I have given but a sketchy account of Casablanca itself. It is the least Moroccan thing in Morocco. It provides a vivid illustration of the fact that in forty years Morocco has made advances which in England and France occupied three centuries. However, the disadvantages are as obvious as the gains. Material progress can be measured, but change of mentality is slower. Advances in industry as in law can only be lasting and substantial on a basis of respect for agreed institutions. In a

community the individual has rights, but not such as may destroy the community.

In Casablanca can be seen the best and the worst of everything in Morocco. Nevertheless, few would doubt that it would have been wiser to have spread the development over half a dozen ports instead of concentrating it on one over-rapid growth.

Not that all my time in Casablanca was spent in examination of its many serious problems. I remember watching the local young men—and a selection of veiled women—queueing to book seats for a film called *Les Nudes de Paris.* As a cleaner relief I plunged into the salt-water swimming bath: with a length of 300 metres, it must be one of the largest in the world. And, as maintenance of machinery is still in a rudimentary state in Morocco, I spent an hour stuck in a lift between two floors because a mechanic had failed to take some elementary precaution.

Yet Mohammed provided my broadest smile. He had especially enjoyed my tour of the factories. In the canning factory they presented me with a case of sardines. I did not see how I could carry it home—at excess air freightage rates!—so deducted a few tins for wayside meals and presented the rest to Mohammed. The sugar factory produced six kilogrammes of sugar, and the tobacco factory thirty packets of cigarettes: Mohammed received them all.

"Where do we go next?" was his constant query.

I mentioned his acquisitive instinct while at the hospital. "Wait here a minute!" said a French nurse with a sense of humour. She disappeared into the maternity ward, and returned with a new-born baby, very dusky of skin. We formed a solemn procession to the car, where she presented the baby to Mohammed. Unfortunately my camera was in the car, so I was unable to secure a permanent record of the astonished and apprehensive look on his face, but it will long remain in my memory.

CHAPTER TWELVE

MAN-MADE OASIS

I

I MIGHT better have headed this chapter 'Mad-Made Desert', for centuries ago the region I next visited flourished. Then the folly of man ruined its natural advantages: the forests were ruthlessly destroyed, affecting the rains and enfeebling the ground. When Morocco was an independent kingdom, neither sultans nor people were moved to restore the natural wealth so foolishly squandered by their ancestors.

We had driven south from Casablanca, at first through fertile country: save for the absence of hedges and the scarcity of trees, it might have been England. But after thirty miles the sparser crops betrayed the shortage of water, and gradually the region deteriorated into a semi-desert.

Even in the cultivated areas, the houses were much inferior to those in the southern Berber regions. Most people here favoured a simple construction—a circle of stones, two or three feet high, surmounted by a conical tent of straw thatch. As the family grew, another tent was added—it was only a few hours' work to make one. By no means were all of the occupants poor, but the local lack of ambition suggests that it is better to make do than to strive for something better. The dwellings maintained the *ksar* idea, even in their simplicity, for they were surrounded by a fence of stones, earth, thorns, or prickly pear—or a mixture of all. The total movable property of the household could have been carried on the back of one donkey—a few rush mats, rugs, and cooking utensils: as simple, indeed, as those of the tents of the nomads, who attached themselves to the larger farms for the harvest.

The phosphate mines of Khouribga were vastly important if not picturesque. Beyond, the country looked as if it had scarcely been disturbed in the last few hundred years. Boujad

was clustered about some ancient mosques, and had a reputation as a religious centre: this did not seem to repress a peasant whose wife had dropped a basket of almonds which she was carrying to market: despite my very scanty knowledge of Arabic, I am prepared to affirm that many of his words of reproval were not to be found in the Koran.

The history of Kasba Tadla was more martial. The castle was built by the Sultan Moulay Ismail to house a regiment of his negro cavalry. It is now occupied by a French detachment, for it still stands, magnificently sited, high above a river valley. Not that the French gained their prize easily. In 1913 they fought a series of fierce engagements against a Berber chieftain and his tribesmen. They won, but a striking monument to the memory of 4,347 officers and men indicates the price which had to be paid.

Now the road again plunged across arid country. Ahead loomed the mountains of the Middle Atlas: at their feet a green speck, which seemed to expand as we approached. This would be Beni Mellal.

Closer acquaintance revealed charming clusters of olive, apricot and mulberry trees, with smaller plants in profusion. Water flowed freely along tiny irrigation trenches: in some of these the women were washing their clothes, their children and—if I correctly interpreted an occasional excited flutter of clothing—themselves. I had been warned earlier not to drink water from local streams; the advice seemed reasonable.

Once in the little town, the greenery was too inviting. I walked in the cool of the evening against the course of the stream which was Beni Mellal's source of wealth. I found the source in the shade of a *kasbah* proudly sited on a rocky eminence: the stream leaped from a grotto in the mountainside to form a waterfall.

Behind it were tumbled mountain masses, eerie in the rapidly growing gloom. To the north, beyond the oasis, stretched the arid plain we had crossed, looking even less attractive in the distance. But the lights of Beni Mellal twinkled merrily below, so I trudged happily down the mountain path, thinking of the wonders that water can work in a desert land. I was to hear the word 'irrigation' mentioned more than once in the next day or two, but I had no complaint.

II

Mohammed had to return to Casablanca, to give evidence in a case involving a traffic accident. He seemed apprehensive as to my capacity to look after myself, and was horrified when I proposed to borrow a bicycle!

However, I had to exchange this pleasant companion for a jeep: assuredly I ought to study irrigation, and local projects were too vast for leisurely inspection. In the course of my journeyings I accumulated an assorted staff of agricultural experts and irrigation engineers. They served me grandly, but worked me hard; your enthusiast seldom considers the possible fatigue of his victim.

At Kasba Tadla I had noticed a small barrage, just above an irregular bridge quite erroneously called Portuguese. The barrage was modest indeed: it made no attempt to halt the muddy waters of the Oued Oum er Rbia, but merely diverted part of them into a canal. But I was to find that this enterprise was the foundation of a wonderful irrigation scheme.

It was in 1927 that a French engineer experimentally constructed a crude dam to divert part of the river. The prospects were not bright: the water was slightly saline, the earth of the plain not especially good—and he had no money!

However, his first experiments were sufficiently favourable to attract attention in high quarters. Local development continued modestly, but in 1941 a special authority was set up to irrigate the area. The barrage was built—for the river has eroded a bed ten to twenty feet below the adjoining surfaces, so it is useless for local watering. Instead, most of its waters were conducted by canal into the northern plain of Beni Amir. There they were distributed—at first in earth trenches, later in more economical concrete canals.

My jeep party explained the scheme, and took me off to see it at work. First to a concrete factory where the open pipes were made: already dozens of miles have been supplied, and the task is still unfinished. From the main canal a number of smaller ones branch off regularly, and each of these feeds a larger number of local canals taking the water to the land itself. There are all the necessary controls: water can be

diverted as and where it is needed. Technically, it was quite obvious, the scheme was most competently conceived and administered. From the desert south of the river I moved in a few yards to a well-wooded region verdant with excellent crops.

"When they first told me about this, I objected," said an old peasant. "It was the will of Allah that the river should run within the banks where He had placed it. Yet at last I was persuaded to try—Allah would surely wreck the scheme if it were against His will. And what wonders have these waters worked! Do you know what my olive trees used to produce in the days when Beni Amir depended on the rains? Six or seven kilogrammes of fruit a year—some years, none at all. There are men only a few kilometres away who have no crop at all this year. But I am getting forty or fifty kilogrammes! Think of it! And some men get as much as eighty kilogrammes. Plainly, the hand of Allah was behind the Frenchmen who made the water flow this way."

I gathered that he had not been alone in his early objections. One of the earliest French tasks was to tidy up the peasant farms: the region included thousands, ranging from one hectare (2½ acres) to ten. And a two-hectare farm might be divided into three or four odd parcels a mile apart!

To get water scientifically to all points, it was essential that the peasant plots should be regularized, so that each should be near one of the canals. This involved many heartaches—and headaches. A peasant entering the scheme had to give up his own ground: he was allocated the same area as his own, and of approximately the same quality—as the greater part of the plain was near-desert, giving scanty fodder for small herds and a miserable crop only in the years when the rains were unusual, this presented no great difficulty. The peasant was even allowed to choose his neighbours!

Speculation was smartly discouraged—for, obviously, irrigation would increase the value of the land by hundreds per cent, and might have afforded too many opportunities to sharp-witted investors. A man was only allowed to sell land, at controlled prices, to a member of his own tribe. Where this was impracticable, the irrigation authority bought it from him—it uses several such stretches as experimental farms.

To each sector of about a thousand hectares is allocated a European 'monitor'. I talked with one of these as we stood on a wooden tower erected in the middle of his estate.

"I get a general directive from the Authority," he said; "my job is to implement it. At first this was hard work. Remember that the peasants here were semi-nomad pastorals—many had never practised cultivation. But they've learned! They've seen how it pays!

"In my sector I have over 250 peasants. Each man's farm includes a cultivated strip and a number of fruit trees. I have to decide on the crops—for, of course, if each man followed his own inclination, systematic irrigation would be impossible, for each crop needs different treatment. We have to consider the land as a whole."

"It would have been simpler to have treated the region as a collective farm?"

"Very much simpler," he agreed. "But it would not have suited our peasants—they are born individualists, and we wanted their support, not their opposition. And once they see the results, the rest follows. We work on a five-year rotation of crops—cereals, vegetables, cotton, alfalfa—and the fifth year fallow. Then there are the trees. On the whole estate we have planted half a million fruit trees and a quarter of a million others. What a change in outlook! Only a few years ago the peasants wanted us to pay them for the work of planting the trees—they could not believe that they were to enjoy the fruits. But now——"

"What about the financial side?"

"Each peasant pays 4,000 francs per year for irrigation. Of course, this is only a fraction of the cost, and it can be paid in kind, from his crops. Cotton has been the biggest success lately. Do you know that, at recent prices, a hectare of cotton can yield up to 200,000 francs in a year?"

"I can believe it—by the price of shirts!"

"Alfalfa is another success—any lucerne, in fact. With sun and water it can be cut eight or nine times a year. At present we dry and export large quantities, but we really want to build up a dairy industry and use it in Morocco.

"The essential point is," he went on, "that a man is *certain* to get crops. Go to the other side of the river, which is not

irrigated. There a man will sow, hoping for some rain. If it comes, he will reap a sparse crop. If it does not come, he gets nothing. Here he *knows* that he will reap a crop, and a good one. The soil is fair, and with sun, water and work he cannot fail. Our yields are about fifteen times as high as those on the other side—that is, those which the peasants here got only a few years ago."

"You advise on seeds, and such like?"

"Better than that—we supply them—on loan, deducting the cost from the crop. We also supply tractors and other machinery if the peasants so wish."

I wandered about the region, marvelling at its richness—especially when compared with the poverty of the neighbouring ground. So far 26,000 hectares have been irrigated: the canals are extended year by year, and soon a total of 40,000 acres on the plains of Beni Moussa and Beni Amir will be under intensive cultivation.

"But what is the idea of this wooden watch-tower?" I asked of the monitor.

"So that I can keep an eye on things. And especially when the water is turned on early in the mornings," he grinned. "Then I can make sure that a man does not steal the water which should be flowing on to his neighbour's farm!"

III

"Yes, we have made a good beginning," said one of the French irrigation experts.

This, though a gross under-statement, proved to be true. The astonishing success of the experiment, under conditions far from perfect, has prompted bolder ideas.

The present scheme, I have explained, covers the plain on the right bank of the river Oum er Rbia. But what of the left bank, between the river and the mountains? Here there was no obvious solution—no other stream whose waters were available. Then French engineers propounded a daring plan.

On the other side of the Middle Atlas Mountains flows a tributary of the Oum er Rbia, the Oued el Abid, flowing approximately parallel to its main stream. Its water is excel-

lent, drawn from catchment grounds in the high valleys. Why not change the course of the river—*why not move the river wholesale to the other side of the mountains?*

This is the simple basis of a grandiose scheme. Obviously, it is very costly, but by ingenious use the water will do double work—first generating electric power and then passing on for irrigation on the plain.

My jeep plunged into the heart of the Middle Atlas, to find a scene like a modern camp of prospectors. Already a tall concrete barrage was erected. By a happy chance, at Bin el Ouidane the valley narrows to a rocky gorge, and here the mighty dam was being built. By the time this book appears it will be completed.

I climbed the mountainside to survey the barrage from above, and to gaze at the doomed valley—a barren region, housing only a few hundred pastoral peasants. They will have to move, of course—but will receive the first grants of the newly irrigated land in the plains. In October 1952 the barrage will be complete, and the mountain streams will accumulate their waters behind it to form a deep lake. Nobody knows how long this will take, for engineers cannot calculate what Moroccan rains are likely to fall. An extraordinarily wet season could fill the valley in a year: a series of droughts might lengthen the period to fifteen years.

Long before this, however, the irrigation scheme will be in operation—it is planned to begin in the spring of 1954. A few kilometres below the barrage a tunnel is being driven through the heart of Mount Tazerkount, one of the heights of the Middle Atlas. I went with the tunnellers by electric railway: they had already completed seven kilometres of their task—another three kilometres remain to be driven. By the time this has been accomplished, enough water will have accumulated behind the barrage to start the irrigation scheme. In effect, the river el Abid will be diverted into a parallel valley ten kilometres away by a ten-foot tunnel through a formidable mountain obstacle. This will indeed be a stupendous achievement.

Yet, before the water begins to irrigate the plain of Beni Moussa it will have worked hard—twice. As it passes through the controls at the barrage, it will drive turbines generating

electric power: then, as it emerges on the north side of the mountains, after its passage along the gentle decline of the tunnel, it will be directed into giant pipes and fall in powerful haste to another generating station at Ait Ouarda-Afourer. The two will combine to produce 550 million kilowatt-hours of electricity a year: with existing resources, it will not only meet Morocco's present requirements—electricity will be exported to Algeria!

Its industrial travail over, the water will turn to agricultural purposes. Two main irrigation canals have already been dug: branches will be added in proper sequences, and within a very few years the considerable area of 90,000 hectares will be under irrigation (i.e. about 350 square miles). As the soil is better than that further north, and the water much purer, results are expected to be almost sensational. I saw experimental trials of seeds and plants in progress, so that there need be no delay in beginning intensive farming. The displaced peasants from the valley doomed by the lake will find their new fields already ploughed *and sown*: all they will have to do is to await the first crops.

The whole plan is to the credit not only of French engineers, but of the ordinary people who found the money to make it possible. The way of France has not been easy: the losses and devastation of two world wars, followed by serious depreciations in the value of the franc, might have deterred a less tenacious people from the expenditure of hundreds of millions of francs in the heart of Morocco. And as one Frenchman put it with justifiable pride: "This is a French enterprise—but for the benefit of the Moroccans."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

BERBER COUNTRY

I

I would not have it thought that all my time in Beni Mellal was spent in examining barrages and irrigation schemes. No day of my journey passed without providing comedy as well as interest.

As I first entered Beni Mellal, late on a Sunday afternoon, familiar sounds directed me to the local football field. A match was in progress. Some of the youths wore boots, some played barefooted. The ground was shockingly hard and, unless controlled at the drop, the ball bounced high over the heads of the adjoining players. The energy put into the game was amazing, especially considering the heat: apart from kicking and heading, the game included twenty-two running commentaries—twenty-three including that of the referee, who trotted around with a whistle in his mouth: more than once it seemed to me that it went off accidentally, for I could see no reason for some of his decisions.

The spectators were not very attentive. A dozen youths cycled at will about the field, occasionally getting in the way of ball or players. Nobody seemed to find this behaviour extraordinary. However, I discovered that this was only a junior match, a prelude to the real encounter.

The seniors all wore boots, with assorted stockings—sometimes odd—and their colourful jerseys carried numbers on their backs. The numbers scarcely ever reflected the true position of the player, but what would you? They ran with great energy, and appeared to be tireless. Although as puzzled as I was by the vagaries of the referee, they did not dispute his decisions.

Suddenly I heard a scream behind me. A woman, her baby tied on behind her back, hitched up her robe to show a streak

of blood. A dog was apparently the culprit, and at the sight of blood he bit her again. He had been licking my hand five minutes earlier, and seemed harmless enough, but evidently the heat had touched him.

"Mad dog!" The cry echoed through the hundreds of spectators. The nearest boys began to throw stones at the dog, missing him but hitting each other. Two or three hundred people ran across the field of play: for a minute or two players and ball were lost in the crowd, but at the moment when the referee's whistle might reasonably have halted the game, it was silent.

The dog, mad or not, was not unnaturally alarmed at the hostile surge towards him, and dashed up the street. The concourse followed, in full cry. One man was gravely concerned: a local policeman was in the home team—was it his duty to play on or to arrest the mad dog? The latter view prevailed, and as the hunt disappeared round a corner I saw his scarlet jersey leading the hue and cry.

In the meantime, in the excitement about the dog, everybody had forgotten the unfortunate woman. I examined the bites: as wounds, they were not serious, but both had drawn blood and she obviously needed immediate attention. She was very frightened, but I stopped a man with a donkey and he agreed to take her at once to the local hospital. There, I had no doubt, they were well equipped to deal with the bites of mad dogs.

The hunt returned, to report the disposal of the dog. The policeman resumed his place on the field. His side had lost nothing by his absence, for one of the linesmen had temporarily taken his place.

II

While I have postponed serious comment on political questions, some incidents should be recorded as they occurred.

The resources of Beni Mellal are not wide—the little town consists of a higgledy-piggledy mass of small houses, made of dried mud, but looking better than those further south because they are whitewashed—but they include a newspaper shop.

Over dinner I read with surprise one dramatic item. Allal el Fassi, President of the Istiqlal Party, now in exile in Egypt, had made a fierce appeal to the Arab League to call a special meeting to discuss the woes of his country. "In the last few weeks hundreds of Moroccans have been massacred," he was reported as saying (May 18th, 1952). He even quoted the places involved—"Casablanca, Safi, Kasba Tadla, Khenifra, Tangier, etc. In addition, thousands of men and women have been imprisoned."

Now this puzzled me. I had been in several of these places during the past few weeks. I am not an entire stranger to civil disturbances or even to massacres, but either I had been singularly unobservant or else the usual accompaniments of such events had been entirely lacking. Further, while some of my Istiqlal contacts had talked, without details, of political prisoners, not one had mentioned massacres. Yet here was a declaration by a responsible man which ought not to be ignored. It so happened that two of the places lay along my route, so for once I did not restrain Mohammed as he hurried towards Kasba Tadla. My reception there was mixed. When I asked: "Where are the bodies? Bring out your dead!" the local people looked at me pityingly: evidently I had lost my reason, and so was worthy of the compassion of Allah. One, more practical than the rest, fetched a policeman.

He, surely, should have heard about the massacres, but disclaimed all knowledge: so did the French officials: so did the townspeople. The atmosphere was gracious and friendly, so when the local undertaker complained that business was slack I hurried on to Khenifra.

Here I was equally unsuccessful. No one had yet seen yesterday's paper, so nothing was known of the dramatic fame of their town.

"Have you any Istiqlal members here?" I asked.

"Oh, yes—you see that man in the grocery shop? He is one of their leading men."

But the grocer knew no more than the rest. He admitted, perhaps rather grudgingly, that there had been no recent troubles in the town, but was very loyal to his leader: evidently Allal el Fassi had been misinformed—the massacres were doubtless elsewhere.

This was Berber country, where it is easier to talk to the women than in Arab regions. They are scarcely politically minded but they are desperately interested in the unnecessary death of their men. Yet no woman could so much as hint at any explanation for the report. Again, the town reposed in an atmosphere of quietness and calm.

I rode on, convincingly assured that the charges were a complete fiction. Yet what could I make of such a fantasy? Denials never catch up with a rumour, or I would have suggested to the French that they invite the entire Arab League to Khenifra, offering a large prize for each body discovered. Yet it was sad to think that opinions can be founded on, and passions excited by, such absurdities. There are surely enough real problems in the world without imaginary ones.

Five miles further on I halted. By the roadside had been erected a black nomad tent, and a crowd of people stood by it. Mohammed suggested a *tertib*, or tax-paying, but the crowd included many women, who would never have been allowed at a man's ceremony.

In the tent two white-coated French doctors were working, taking blood samples while a Moroccan clerk noted names. This was part of an anti-malaria campaign. The samples would be tested at Meknes, and any affected persons would be treated. The local caid had told the people when and where to assemble, and had himself suffered the first experimental prick of the needle. Two or three hundred followed: then the tent was dismantled and packed, so that the medical team could move on to another rendezvous.

Yet apparently the French will have to be careful. The campaign may be slightly distorted in its transmission to Allal el Fassi. "Every day, even in the heart of the countryside, the French are shedding Moroccan blood . . ."[1]

III

Khenifra was not always as peaceful. It is a pleasant place,

[1] To be fair to the Istiqlal leader, I found that there had been riots at Tangier some weeks earlier. Details are given in a later chapter: the dead numbered not hundreds, but six, and the French were in no way concerned.

amid the homely foothills of the Middle Atlas, on the banks of the Oum er Rbia—here a rushing mountain stream of a healthy green hue.

It was Moulay Ismail who made a town out of an insignificant village, but not until the end of the nineteenth century did that Khenifra come into its own. Then a local caid named Moha ou Hammou began to develop the place: he built a *kasbah* and *souks*, and encouraged commerce. But when money ran short he broke with the Sultan and set himself up as an independent prince. He organized a brigand force among his Zaiane tribesmen, and looted any caravans which passed his way. By this time the sultans were so weak that they had no means of dealing with an unruly subordinate.

The area of the raids widened—once Moha ventured as far as Meknes. The *djichs* of Khenifra became famous—or should it be infamous—but the brigand trade proved profitable.

Thus, when the French took over Morocco, Moha and his tribesmen prepared to resist. They did not care much about Morocco, and less about the Sultan, but law and order were the last things they wanted.

Lyautey always preferred friendly approaches rather than war, but found Moha ou Hammou, king of the Berber mountains, intractable. The surrounding tribes proved more amenable—they had suffered so much from their bandit neighbours. Khenifra became the fortified centre whence mobile columns harassed the French: the nuisance must be eliminated.

Yet in June 1914 a French force of 20,000 men had to fight a three-day battle before the town was captured. Even then Moha escaped into the mountains, taking his women and sons with him. As the former numbered forty, his sons alone gave him the basis of a field force, and he carried on the fight. Stragglers rallied to him, and in November the French garrison marched out to attack him. The tribesmen were surprised at El Herri, but the local levies with the French tarried to loot: the Berbers recovered and inflicted a disastrous defeat on the French. Another memorial records the death of more than 600 officers and men, including the French commander.

The French accomplished a rapid counter-stroke, but the prestige of the old Moha ou Hammou remained high. With the French forces depleted by the superior claims of the World

War, Moha virtually laid siege to Khenifra for five years! Every six months a French column fought its way through with supplies, but the garrison's hold was indeed tenuous. When the World War ended, however, the French were able to give serious attention to this irritant region. The neighbouring tribes were rallied: even some of Moha's sons passed over to the French camp. The now aged caid was offered terms, but preferred to fight it out, and in 1920 he was defeated and killed in a mountain fastness.

"But not by the French!" emphasized an old man in Khenifra. "They could not get near him. It was treachery. Men of our own Zaia tribe fought against him, and shot him."

"It was not treachery," said another. "Our chiefs argued with Moha—further resistance was hopeless, as they saw. But he said: 'You may make your peace with the Infidel. I am too old to change my ways.' So they submitted to the French—even Moha's sons. But he fought on—though the French would have received him with honour. Then one day he rode against a detachment of his own tribe which had submitted—it was a Zaian bullet which killed him. It passed through his throat —like this." His action was expressive.

"You knew him?"

"I was there, with him!"

We were squatting by the ruined *kasbah* which Moha el Hammou had built in the days of his pride. Today it houses a colony of storks—indeed, Khenifra must have more storks to the square roof than any other town in Morocco. Now we walked over to a neighbouring building, more modest and modern, where a court was in progress.

"We have a good caid here," said my friend. "He has helped the French to give us peace."

"It sounds as if you needed it."

"We did! Our caid is the grandson of Moha ou Hammou."

IV

The road progressed through the foothills, home of a thousand herds of sheep and goats. Near the river, trees flourished, with abundant flowers. By the wayside was another tent, with

men waiting their turn. This was a *tertib*, a tax assessment such as I had seen near Amizmiz, but here in open country. A grave khalifa and a French civil servant summoned the men to the tent tribe by tribe to make their declarations. A Moroccan clerk rattled off an inquisition.

"Camels?"

"One."

"Horses?"

"None."

"Mules?"

"None."

"Donkeys?"

"One."

"Just a minute—last year you had two."

"I have sold one, to a man of my tribe."

The man was called to confirm this, but failed to do so. He had *borrowed* the donkey, he said, not bought it. An argument ensued, to be settled by the khalifa. The actual owner must pay the tax, of course: it was up to him to recover a proportion of it from the borrower.

The occasional villages were primitive enough. On the mountains the houses were one-storey mud huts, squatting in ridges against the slope. In the valleys the peasants preferred a low wall of mud bricks with a roof of aged and dirty straw, the colour of the repulsive thorn hedges. Hovels, one might reasonably call them: yet their owners were not necessarily poor. The peasants were doing quite well, and many families had a man at work in the neighbouring lead or antimony mines.

In one village the headman spoke good French—he had served in the French Army. As we sat talking, his wife stayed in the room—unusual, and in the Arabicized regions unknown.

"Berbers are always monogamous," said my friend. "Real Berbers, that is. Those who have adopted Arab ideas may take more than one wife—*if* they can afford it.

"Our women have more rights than with the Arabs. If I divorce my wife, I have to return her dowry, unless she were barren or proved unfaithful. It is understood that we speak in general terms—in my case neither applies!

"As you see, our women are not veiled. And there are no

'blind' marriages. I knew my woman for years before we married. Yes, our parents 'arranged' it—that is, they thought they did, but we had arranged it long beforehand.

"Women can also appear before the *djemaa* with complaints. Sometimes they do!

"The *djemaa* is not quite what it was. We can judge local cases of law, but real crime is taken away from us. In some ways our old laws were better than the French. If I blinded you, then I myself was blinded as a punishment. That makes me think before I do wrong!

"We had no imprisonment—that would have been too cruel for a mountain Berber. We preferred fines or mutilation."

"And in cases of murder?"

"Custom varied in different tribes. Some claimed a life for a life. Others had a system of *dia*, or blood money—a very heavy fine for a man, variable for a woman."

"How do you mean—variable?"

"If I killed a woman, the *dia* would be half that of a man. But if she were pregnant, I had to pay the full *dia*. And if it could be proved that the child in her womb was male—*dia* and a half.

"However, there never was much murder among us—in our own villages, that is to say. Of course, occasionally we attacked and killed people of other tribes, but naturally that was quite different.

"Did you know that our women often used to fight beside us in battle? They were not very gentle, especially to prisoners. And if any man were a coward, the women would henna him in patterns, like the fancy women.

"Perhaps I said wrongly, fancy. Our women like adorning themselves."

"So do ours! And most others."

He said something to his wife. Her hands appeared from the folds of her gown, and I saw that they were stained with henna into a pattern like an openwork glove. Then she exhibited her feet, which were likewise stained.

"Yet we have to keep women in their place," he went on. "They are useful companions, but terrible bosses. By our custom, they cannot inherit, while Arab women can. It was put to our tribe that the Koran says that a woman shall inherit

one-seventh of her husband's estate. But we came to the conclusion that the Prophet had made a mistake: inheritance—we accepted his direction on that; but our figure was one-seventh of one-seventh!"

V

The land was richer as we approached Azrou, distinguished by the rock which gives the town its name. Yet the pride of Azrou is not its prosperity, reflected in its busy *souk*, but a fine modern building on three sides of a square, with balconied floors. This was the Berber College.

Azrou is near the heart of wild mountain country, inhabited by Berber tribes who for centuries had never recognized a central authority. The French realized that military conquest was only a temporary expedient: they must inject their ideas into the minds of the tribesmen—especially of the tribal chiefs, whose influence was profound.

In 1927 a local officer opened a school at Azrou. He could persuade no children to attend save those of his servants! The teacher persisted in his efforts, however. Knowledge of the outside world, and an appreciation of French intentions, were essential to a genuine pacification of the region. After a year of hard work he managed to collect fifteen pupils as boarders, often against the wish of their fathers and always against the fanatic resistance of the mothers. But not one of the tribal chiefs would co-operate. At first the only pupils came from tribes which had joined the French in the military campaigns.

In 1930 patience achieved a triumph—three chiefs sent their sons to the school. By now there were sixty pupils: a very mixed lot—many had virtually run away from home to attend, most were over-age, some were married!

Progress was steady: but in 1944 a distinguished French soldier was appointed to the task. His success was complete: he could talk to Berber warrior chiefs on equal terms: they knew his quality, and trusted him. Indeed, when the end of the war released a thirst for knowledge which had never been previously experienced, the college had to be extended. Today another wing is about to be added.

The school now has 330 pupils, including 220 boarders. Many of these are supported by scholarships, but if their fathers are rich they are expected to pay. The field of recruitment has been widened. Sons of chiefs are still welcomed, but village schools are scoured for bright boys of all classes. The college is virtually a secondary school serving a mountain area—but, though it includes moderately advanced subjects, many of the pupils have to learn to read and write before they can take them!

The staff is mixed French and Moroccan—and the basic language is, of course, Berber, not Arabic. Literary Arabic is, however, the first subsidiary language taught to all pupils: for a second, they may choose between English and popular Arabic.

In the latter stages of the tuition there is some degree of specialization. Boys are encouraged to become teachers. Even if they are unwilling to move on to a higher establishment, they can still be useful in the elementary village schools. Another section concentrates on law, with the idea of preparing young men for the posts of assistants to tribal judges: the training of a professional corps of judges is an urgent and vital task. Until it is well advanced, the present unsatisfactory system cannot be scrapped.

Other pupils pass out to the Military College of Meknes, where they are trained to become army officers: others prefer more localized pursuits, and there is a very practical artisan course in Moroccan crafts. Shorthand and typing are available for the few who prefer a secretarial career—the girl typist has not yet invaded the Moroccan scene. Some of the brighter pupils move on to the Lycée at Meknes, with a view to preparation for French universities. I could not survey the records without a thrill, when I saw that sons of mountain Berbers were training as doctors in Paris or as agriculturalists at Grenoble.

Behaviour in the college—as in other schools—is excellent, and disciplinary infringements are rare. An experimental farm is attached for practical instruction: a troop of Scouts is active —and in winter a Ski Club is very popular, though football remains prime favourite at all seasons.

"Difficulties with the pupils? Never—or almost never," the director of the college declared. "They are immensely keen and very intelligent. My most diplomatic work is with the

parents. Although the last few years have seen great advances, there is still some suspicion—still plenty of people who believe that a boy should begin to earn his living at the age of nine. But I keep in continuous contact with the parents. They are frequent visitors to the college, and see how well their boys live."

This latter was an under-statement. Conditions were excellent: the buildings would pass in any Western European country. Any deviation from local Berber standards is introduced delicately. It was the students themselves who asked if they could have ordinary tables and chairs for meals, instead of the low stools which previously served. And they now sleep in beds in the dormitories, instead of the ubiquitous rush mats.

Yet later in the day I chanced across another aspect of the Berber college which may be the most important of all. I had halted in a village, and the local headman provided conversation. When I mentioned Azrou he got very excited.

"My son is there!" he cried. "Is it not magnificent? Once I was reluctant, for I have a good farm, and what more could my son want? But now—do you know what affected me? They invited me, and others like me, to see the college. It is a fine place, is it not? And there, as we walked around, I saw French boys in the Berber classes. What is more, they were the sons of the teachers. So I thought, 'If these clever Frenchmen think that this school is good enough for their own sons, then I can safely entrust mine to their care.'"

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE TRIPLE CITY

I

As soon as I had dumped my bag at the hotel, I set out to get lost in Fez. I achieved this feat in two minutes—by no means a record: I bettered it myself several times within the next few days.

To see Fez properly you need a car, a donkey, and a stout pair of legs. In some circumstances the first two can be dispensed with, but the last is essential. There are streets in Fez where not even a donkey can promenade with pannier-room.

The triple city is almost the oldest Islamic centre in Morocco. It was founded in A.D. 808 by Moulay Idriss II, whose tomb stands at the centre of his creation, and is greatly venerated. He chose the lower slopes of a mountainside, overlooking a wide plain, as a site for his powerful walls. Within them he established his capital. Other sultans changed the seat of government, but Fez remained the educational and religious heart of the country—and today Nationalism is a firmer growth there than in Rabat or Casablanca.

The city expanded, and pushed its defences outwards. Under the Merinides it thrived to such an extent that a new city was built alongside the old: Fez Djedid alongside Fez el Bali. As the new city was built in 1274, the visitor will not expect the skyscrapers of Casablanca. There *is* one three-storey building, true, erected by a sultan who, smitten by the Moorish passion for mechanical gadgets, added a couple of floors to his palace so that he could install a lift. Before the work was completed, however, he had lost his job, so that his storeyed palace has only a liftshaft.

The two cities did not exhaust the possibilities of defence. Lines of walls connected them, but others sprouted irregularly to enclose the Sultan's palace, a garden, or a barracks. Then,

outside all, the French built a new city, in European style. Here your motor-car is useful, for the architects were not cramped for space. You may even drive through Fez Djedid by a single route. But Fez el Bali defeats everything on wheels. Your car may make a precarious entrance by eastern or western gates, but then the narrowing streets inexorably bring you to a halt: you can do no more than to send your conveyance to a rendezvous at the other end of the city, while you mount your donkey or less ostentatiously make your way on foot. The car will do five miles to your one, for the mountain slopes impel wide loops.

I have never yet read a satisfying description of the *medina* of a Moroccan city, and have no hope of writing one myself. Imagine a confused labyrinth of narrow streets, scarcely six feet wide. There is no pattern, and ten yards in a straight line would qualify for comment. The roads follow the uneven contours of the mountain slope: they are flanked by tall houses —some with protruding upper storeys meeting across the street. Sometimes a residential thoroughfare reveals nothing but blank walls: behind them, could you but penetrate, lie evil slums and magnificent palaces, often side by side, and indistinguishable in their approaches.

Occasionally the monotony is broken by local *souks*, selling everything from food to paraffin: or by streets of artisans, each working in his cubbyhole and ready, if pressed, to break off and discuss a sale. A street will be devoted to a single trade: the metal workers turn out trays of brass or copper hammered with traditional designs: your choice is more limited than the long line of shops might suggest, but there are differences in quality of workmanship, and in price—which depends on your own bargaining powers. The tourist's disadvantage is that he is always in a hurry: a real bargain demands, not an hour, but at least a week.

There is a river at Fez, with tributaries, but they are seldom to be seen. For the most part, they flow beneath the maze of houses, and are tapped a thousand times in their course. When you buy a house in the city, two contracts are involved: one concerns the house, the other its water rights. The latter is much more likely to cause trouble than the former.

The underground river also serves to drive a dozen or more

flour mills within the city walls. The Moroccan housewife likes her flour fresh. She takes her corn to the miller, brings home the flour, and makes and bakes her bread. There are few professional bakers, and their loaves are considered inferior to the home products.

You do not need to ask your way to the tanners' quarter—your nose will guide you. A modern co-operative with machinery is now available, but many prefer the traditional way. Both methods produce that supple, bright-coloured leather which is the pride of Morocco, and whose working is the pride of Fez. Nowhere in the world is the craft of the artisan in leather so high and the products in goatskin and sheepskin so fine.

There are *souks* of carpet shops: of silks, and spices. In some, straw thatch has been loosely plaited above the street, to throw a draught-board pattern of shadow and sunlight on passers-by and any bare patches of ground. These are infrequent. The crowd is continuous—but it does not jostle, for hurry is anathema to the Moroccan mind. Loud cries of *Balek*! announce the approach of laden donkeys: there are so many such warnings that the ear ceases to remark them. I complimented myself on my agility when, after a morning in the *souks* of Fez, I found only two tears in my jacket—one caused by the pannier of a donkey, the other by a man staggering under a load of iron.

In one street men make and sell only *baboushes*, the heel-less slippers of Morocco. Before you buy, borrow a pair and wear them for an hour—they are not easy to keep on until you have the knack. Men generally wear plain yellow slippers: women every colour, gaily embroidered. Ladies should avoid purchasing golden slippers—their local use might lead to untoward incidents, for they are the badge of the prostitute.

There is colour on every hand, and continual interest in the passing crowd. Men in *djellabahs* of fine white wool pass by men in *djellabahs* of brown homespun, ignoring the men in rags and patches of a dozen hues. Discreetly-veiled women in grey robes—the material of magnificent quality, but the cut deliberately designed to hide any beauty of figure—pass by unveiled sisters from the peasant villages, with babies tied to their backs and loads on their heads.

The endless traffic moves awkwardly, for there seem to be no rules. Occasionally there is a break in the lane of walls

or tiny shops to reveal a fountain, or the entrance to a *fonduk*, the traditional Arab lodging for travellers. Or another yard, as lively as the Stock Exchange on a busy day: here the tanners bring their hides, and the leather workers compete for their purchase.

Next, still huddled close to mean streets, rise buildings of great size. From the heights above, Old Fez is dominated by the minaret and green roofs of the Karaouine mosque. You may pass it by—entrance is strictly forbidden to the infidel, and even a glance through the open door is unwelcome. Should you risk it, however, you will notice the vast expanse of the rush-matted floor—20,000 worshippers at a time can be crowded in—and observe a large number of courts and secluded corners. Knowing something of Moslem education, you will not be surprised to hear that the Karaouine is a university as well as a mosque.

II

Though many sultans made additions, the Karaouine mosque is a thousand years old. It has a magnificent Arabic library, and has been for centuries the centre of Moroccan intellectual life. True, though it is as famous as that of El Azar at Cairo, it does not resemble the Western idea of a university. Of the 2,000 students, half are boys of fifteen: the others include middle-aged men—for, if their means permit, they will prolong their courses for twenty or thirty years. Nowadays there is an attempt to plan an organized three-year course, and a complete novelty has been introduced—examinations!

The subjects are Moslem theology, Arabic and Koranic law: a few students add astronomy and even astrology. In 1950 history and geography were added to the curriculum, and received without much enthusiasm. There is little formality. A professor squats on the rush matting, his students around him. The lecture may continue for one hour or four, at his whim: the discussion period is usually longer. There are no 'outside activities' or sports clubs: apart from their work, the interests of the students are devoted to politics.

The *medersas*, or residential colleges, are often ancient and beautiful. Not that their conditions are luxurious. A monk's

cell is of generous proportions compared with the tiny room which houses two or three students. However, accommodation and tuition are free—the students even get a free loaf of bread every day. Nevertheless, their maintenance at the Karaouine usually involves sacrifices on the part of their families.

After their course, the students qualify as teachers in Koranic schools attached to the mosques, as lawyers, and eventually as *cadis*, or judges under Koranic law.

The *ulemas*, or professors, are learned men of great authority. They have the right to elect a new sultan—today the privilege is perhaps somewhat nominal. The purity of the Moslem faith and Moroccan culture is in their keeping. Not all of them confine themselves to formal teaching. As I walked by the mosque with a Moroccan friend, he halted by one of the box-like structures which would normally be an artisan's workshop. Here I was introduced to a venerable professor, squatting on a mat, a man of great dignity and learning. He sat each day in this public place so that his wisdom should be available to all comers—not merely to the university students, but any who cared to consult him.

In a nearby courtyard books were being auctioned to a large crowd of impecunious students. The auctioneer simply held up a book and stimulated the bidding—which was brisk, in marked contrast to the usual lengthy process of bargaining.

I got into conversation with some of the youths, and they invited me to visit their *medersa*. I had understood that a permit was necessary, but they waved such restrictions aside. Seven of us crowded into one small apartment, or cell, squatting on the mattresses.

"You have no lectures this morning?" I asked.

"Well, yes. But we are on strike."

"What?"

"There is a teacher to whom we object."

"And you can strike for that?"

"Yes. And we can win. He will go."

I had heard rumours that the students at the Karaouine were emulating their Egyptian friends in political activity, so that I was not surprised to learn the fault of the boycotted teacher: he was too friendly with the French!

"We are Moroccans—Moslems," they complained. "We want

to re-establish an independent state, a Moslem country founded only on Koranic law." They went on to define a theocratic state which would be a remarkable anachronism in the modern world.

I had heard that the students of the Karaouine were violently Nationalist. So they were, but if these and my other contacts were typical, their political ideas differ very considerably from those of the Istiqlal leaders. One of these later expressed himself forcibly.

"Students—babies!" he exclaimed—almost hissed. "They want to move backwards, not forwards. They stuff their minds full of ancient ideas—and are afraid to face modern science. They are useful for demonstrations, but no more. When we are in power, we shall reorganize the pattern of education. Even the French schools are better than this!"

I doubt if he dared have said this direct to the Karaouine students, for they are very proud of their university. Yet over their midday meal—boiled goat and vegetables—my friends constantly strayed from their studies into politics.

"We are all Istiqlal—all!" they declared, evidently unable or unwilling to recognize the political gap between them and the 'others'.

But after I had left the ancient and dignified *medersa*, and was threading my way through the narrow streets, I found one of the students at my elbow.

"I wanted another word with you," he said, quietly.

"Yes?"

"You remember what we said about Istiqlal?"

"Indeed I do—that you all belonged."

"That is true. But *why* do I belong?"

"Tell me."

"Because I want to get my diploma. What chance would I have if I did not go with the crowd? If they will strike against a non-Istiqlal professor, what would they do with a mere student? You have no idea of the political control in this place—it seems to me that the students are the bosses, not the teachers. So, you see, I *have* to belong to Istiqlal."

"I begin to see. Are you alone?"

"No. I am not alone. But in Morocco it does not pay to go against the crowd."

III

I had visited schools in many towns and villages along my route. After my encounter with the Karaouine students, Fez prompted a more detailed inspection. I passed from elementary schools to an establishment for girls—the older ones wore veils when journeying between home and school. The buildings were grouped around a pleasant garden, and the girls wore their best frocks—it was the day of the annual photograph. Most of the teachers were Frenchwomen, save for Arabic; for this subject Moroccans officiated—men, since women teachers were not yet available. Only very gradually are the Moroccan women being 'emancipated'—and the question least welcomed by any political leader concerned their status. I did see one Moroccan girl driving a car: she wore her veil, but her eyes were, of course, unobscured.

The Lycée at Fez was large—1,200 pupils—and mixed: not merely girls and boys, but French, Jews and Moroccans. The children mingled quite easily, and naturally. I talked with several of the 300 Moroccans; there was no doubt about their happiness—or about their ability, for they held good places in their classes. I asked two girls what they wanted to be. "A doctoress," they said, in turn.

"Excellent!" the principal agreed, when I mentioned this. "But I wish that more of them would train for teachers. We import too many teachers from France. Morocco needs Moroccan teachers."

Next came a Mussulman College, of Lycée standard, with the Koran added to the European list of studies. Then another technical college, very practical. Morocco needs many more of these—including one or two more advanced.

The Nationalist propaganda is very critical of educational progress. It paints a very rosy picture of the state of education prior to 1912—when, in fact, Morocco merely boasted mosque schools, where a small minority of boys learned to read and write Arabic, and learned by heart long passages from the Koran. Many of these schools still exist—staffed by Karaouine graduates, or the like—but the Nationalist leaders have themselves admitted their inadequacy. Some men, with their own

private fortunes, have established 'new model' schools on modern lines. I had seen some of these, and admired them. In fact, I wondered why the Nationalists, who are well supported by the wealthier class, had not done far more for themselves in this vital respect.

Their anti-French propaganda is biased and exaggerated, but it is quite true that education lags. Even today there are only places for about 10 per cent of the Moroccan children. Conditions vary greatly: in most towns they are much better, but many villages have no schools at all. The position is much worse than in comparable British territories.

But education is not merely a question of building schools and providing teachers: it needs also the will to learn. On this question there is ample evidence of Moroccan backwardness. I might have mistrusted politicians, but when devoted teachers showed me their school records I was convinced. Time after time I found schools where for years the available places had not been filled. Teachers had tried persuasion, local officers had employed near-threats in efforts to induce parents to send their children, but most Moroccans preferred to put their boys to work as soon as they had attained a mature age—say, nine or ten: while of course it was unthinkable for girls to go to school at all. (It is significant that 75 per cent of the Jewish children in Morocco attend school. Where no opportunities were provided officially, the Jews made their own.)

The Moroccan outlook, it is good to record, has now changed considerably. During the second World War tens of thousands of Moroccans had new contacts with people of other countries. The technical excellence of the Allied armies in Morocco was in itself a revelation. Since the end of the war, everyone agrees, the demand for education has risen consistently. The French, looking ahead from the angle of the 1930's, were taken by surprise. The number of Moroccan scholars in the government schools was less than 10,000 in 1920, and rose painfully to 35,000 by 1945—then leaped to 115,000 in 1950, and is still rising rapidly. The avowed *and achieved* aim of the Director of Education is 'a new classroom every day', and it is true that the figure of pupils under instruction mounts daily by forty. Thus, while the blame for unsatisfactory conditions in the past

must at least be divided, only the most churlish of critics could grumble at recent progress.

The principal Nationalist complaint comes from another angle, however—that the education provided is 'not Moroccan'. It is true that the French have had to rely largely on their own teachers, and that their schools include many modern subjects taboo or neglected in the Koranic schools. It is true, further, that the educational system has been adapted to meet the requirements of the Berber-speaking districts. To the Nationalists this is a deliberate dividing of Morocco into two factions—and I would not care to claim that all French officials in the past could claim innocence of such a motive. Yet if I were a Berber I feel that I should prefer my native tongue to any other: and, if a second language were necessary for instruction, I should prefer French, in which modern teachers are available, rather than Arabic, in which they are not.

This point is of especial importance in respect of higher education, a vital need for the Morocco of tomorrow. There are very few institutions where modern subjects are taught in Arabic, but France can offer the resources of some of the finest universities in the world.

The Moroccan average of intelligence is high: his memory, I have said, is often remarkable. Now that the demand for education has come, it should be encouraged to the full. Bitter wrangling about the blame for past deficiencies will not produce the teacher-a-day which the new classrooms require.

IV

Long before I left England I had decided that there was one Moroccan I must meet.

"He invites you to dinner this evening," said a friend at Fez. "Maybe I had better come with you—he does not speak French."

We halted by a door in a wall in a mean street—on the opposite side a man was dragging a woman away from a house, while her shrieks of protest aroused the interest of the neighbours. It is not for a European to interfere between a Moroccan and his wife, so I followed my friend meekly into a large court-

yard—"packed with pilgrims all day," he said—and then to an inner door. Here a man of middle age awaited me—good looking and intelligent. He spoke excellent French, informing me that his father awaited me. To be strictly accurate, he did not mention his father: he said "the Sherif".

The Sherif Abd el Hadj Kittani is the most learned man in Morocco: indeed, he ranks high among the savants of the Orient. He has preached the Grand Sermon at Mecca: the Pope receives him with honour: he is head of the Kittaniya Fraternity—approximately equivalent to a religious order like the Jesuits or Franciscans, though not so large or so powerful. A fraternity was usually founded by some holy man, who preached to a group of followers. On his death his grave would become holy, and his successor would command the spiritual obedience of his adherents. The Sherif is head of one of the most important of the Moroccan Fraternities, founded by his grandfather. His library is famous, and he himself has written more than 200 books: even allowing for his greater age, such a total—and all books of wisdom—made my own 75 appear as the outpourings of a beginner.

Pilgrims come from far beyond the Moroccan borders to seek his *baraka*, or blessing. When he travels, he is received with high honour in a dozen countries. Although, so far as is known, he never struck a blow in anger, his enemies are afraid of him—of his prestige and his mind.

He was seated at a magnificent Damascus desk, beautifully inlaid. He was a large man—even his loose, grey, striped *djellabah* could not disguise his girth: his complexion was lighter than mine—a pale pink which contradicted his eighty years; and his bright eyes below bushy eyebrows quarrelled with the small grey beard at his chin. As an incongruous crown he wore a green knitted skull cap, held in place by a piece of elastic.

Where had I seen him before? I wondered. Then I realized: he could have played Falstaff almost without make-up.

After friendly greetings—and no welcome is so warm as that of the traditional Moroccan—we moved into his library, a long hall, its shelves as untidy as mine. Some of his ancient manuscripts are priceless. Yet, beside some fount of ancient wisdom, I noticed oddments of pottery and other ornaments, mostly of

little value. As they had been brought as gifts by members of the Fraternity, they must be preserved. "They were given with the heart: that places them beyond value."

We began to talk. His son and my friend acted as interpreters in relays, and we kept both of them busy for two hours. I was content to leave the talking to him. It is not often that a man can feel that he is in close contact with the wisdom of the ages: at times it was like listening to Moses.

He talked with great animation: his vitality, for his age, was amazing: so was his memory—he quoted aptly from all the philosophies of the world. The sincerity of his comment emphasized even simple points: "Truth is like oil in water: it comes to the top."

We adjourned to another room for a *diffa*, happily much simpler than those I had previously suffered. He was a good host, with a rare sense of humour. Yet, as his son whispered aside, he required that even his guests should adhere to Fraternity rules in his house: for example, there was no smoking.

After the meal we returned to the library. Now the conversation took a topical turn. I found him violently anti-Nationalist. Once he had been the most famous of the Karaouine professors, but his students had 'struck' against his outspoken opinions. Further, I had heard that he had a personal grievance against the Sultan's family. In the days of confusion before the protectorate, one of his brothers attempted to seize the throne—as his title Sherif indicates, he is a direct descendant of Mohammed's daughter Fatima. The attempt failed, and the brother was executed by the reigning sultan, an uncle of the present monarch. Thus a blood feud was born. When I put the question to him, he did not contradict it. Obviously, since the Sultan has identified himself with the Nationalist cause, the Sherif's family dislike of the Sultan could have translated itself into opposition to Nationalism.

Yet his attitude has a stronger philosophical background. "I am a Moroccan, and know my people. I remember what many of them forget—the anarchy which prevailed here before the French took charge. In 1905 I had to make a journey to Rabat. Today I go by car in a couple of hours: then I had to organize a caravan, with an armed guard."

Now he plunged into history, again with rare erudition. No matter where the conversation turned, he spoke with the assuredness of an encyclopedia—yet without a trace of pomposity. He flattered me more than once by assuming knowledge on my part on subjects of which I was profoundly ignorant.

Then he returned to our own times. He had heard that I had written about Russia, and revealed himself a severe critic of Communism—not as an economic theory, an aspect which scarcely interested him, but because of its lack of 'spiritual foundation'. Once, he told me, he had discussed with the Pope a united Christian-Moslem campaign against Communism. He revealed another cause for his dislike of the Nationalists: they were not themselves Communists, he agreed, but could so easily be captured by them.

I should need a whole book to record the conversation of a single evening. I staggered from the house carrying the volumes of his history of Arabic literature, his present to me. I cannot read it, but it is precious to me as a perpetual reminder of an intellectual feast beyond any in my experience.

I do not wonder that the Nationalist leaders abhor the Sherif Kittani. Maybe they are afraid of him: his prestige is so much higher than theirs. His firm control of his Fraternity means that there are tens of thousands of devoted adherents who will never be persuaded into an Istiqlal which aims to include all Moroccans. To orthodox Moslems he is in the category of a saint, and his influence is profound.

"People say that I am pro-French," he said. "Well, it may be true. I am pro- the people who have given peace to Morocco, and against those who would again lead their land into the paths of strife. It is only in the days of peace that wisdom flourishes, for strife is folly in itself.

"Ignorance—that is the enemy. Yet the greatest immediate danger is apathy in the face of evil."

By virtue of his rank as head of the Fraternity, Sherif Kittani is automatically rated as a holy man. Hence the confusion of the Nationalists: however much they disagree with his views, it is always difficult to argue with a saint.

V

Fez teemed with interesting personalities. I shall speak of the politicians later, but their erudition seemed superficial compared with that of the Khalifa Si Mohammed el Hebabi, Astronomer to the Karaouine University, and now engaged in working out the hours of the approaching fast of Ramadan. His antique instruments might provoke a smile at Greenwich, but combined with his skill they produce remarkably accurate results.

The finest palace I visited was that of the Mokri family. Its head is Grand Vizier (or Prime Minister) to the Sultan. He is rich in experience, for he has held the post for forty years—surely a world record. He is a hundred years old, but still goes about his affairs of state, and displays an astonishing memory.

His brother, a youngster of eighty, received me in the family mansion at Fez. It is not old—there was a spate of new building at the turn of the last century—but its decoration is in the traditional style, and the view from its terrace is magnificent. Again it was approached by an insignificant street, which gave no hint of the splendour behind the bare walls.

Other contacts were more humble. Since hotel accommodation in Morocco is sometimes inadequate, I had asked a friend in Fez to book me a room. This he had done in the Palais Jamai, a fascinating place.

It was built fifty years ago by two brothers named Jamai, of a distinguished Fez family. Then, when a sultan died, there was a struggle for control over the new monarch between the Jamai brothers and the Sultan's major-domo, an ex-slave named Ba Ahmed. The two brothers lost, were imprisoned, tortured, and died. All their possessions were seized by the victor, and their Fez palace was bought by a French company and transformed into an hotel.

So you may lodge in an Arab palace, with a gloriously decorated ceiling above your modern bed: you may lounge in the court of the harem, or in halls which reflect the old glories of Arabic artistry. And from the garden of exotic plants you may survey Old Fez beneath your feet.

But, of course, you have to pay for such privileges. However,

since I was spending half my time in local houses, whether palaces or cottages, a decorated ceiling in my bedroom was of no great importance. Further, I had to watch my currency problems. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, recognizing that a book on Morocco would be in the international interest, had kindly graded me as a business man for the purpose of my journey: my outlook being more economical than that of the average business man on tour, and receiving endless hospitality, I had without difficulty made one week's sumptuous allowance expand into six of more modest standard: yet my journey was still incomplete. Economy was imperative. As a deciding issue, someone organized an all-night dance in the garden below my window. I might have slept through a classical concert, but negroid rhythms on saxophones are too penetrating. I had ample opportunity to consider both the painted ceiling and the financial situation. Yet perhaps I was too drastic: the sudden contrast between a lovely palace and an Arab *fonduk* was somewhat precipitate.

My staff work was bad, too. Having carried my bag to the Nejjarine *fonduk*—for the streets of Fez easily defeated Mohammed's Citroen—I discovered that the inn had been transformed into a police office. The man on duty, after a short interrogation to assure himself of my sanity, led me to the nearest inn open to receive clients.

Its caretaker also eyed me curiously: evidently European guests were rare. The building was on two floors around a courtyard, already well populated with donkeys, sheep and a couple of camels. I was ushered into a small cell-like apartment: a rush mat and a doubtful blanket supplied my bedding.

It so happened that I had to go out immediately to meet some friends: by the time I returned it was after dark, and a dozen groups were preparing evening meals over little charcoal stoves. Evidently the landlord had mentioned the unusual guest, for I did not lack for invitations—I was able to select the party with the most appetizing dish. Conversation was more difficult, for only two or three of the men had any French.

I gathered that most of them were peasants who had come in to sell produce—usually sheep, goats or skins. They were not too happy. "These men of the cities, they cheat. When

they buy your skins, they give a low price. But when you buy slippers, they tell you that leather is dear."

"Yes," another agreed. "They are cleverer than we are, with words."

"We do wrong in coming to the city, friend. We should make them come to our villages. They would have to come—they could not do without us."

"You are right. And we *can* do without them. Who wants their slippers—is it the first time we have gone barefoot?"

So the conversation went on: I had heard it in a dozen countries, the eternal conflict between town and country. It is true that the peasant has seldom had a square deal in any land. The industrial worker often complains that he is exploited by the employer, but he has himself joined in the exploitation of the peasant. Modern industrial economy has been founded on cheap food, to the detriment of the men who produce it. Hitherto the peasant has seldom realized his own strength. That sturdy individualism which is one of his strongest characteristics has been also his prime failing. For he holds all the winning cards, did he but know how to play them: he can do without the townsman's slippers, but the townsman cannot do without his food.

I guided the talk gently to political matters, but the interest was not as great as in personal and local affairs. Reasonably early I prepared for bed. I rejected the blanket, and hoped for a warm night. My last public appearance was a sensation. Apparently my friends had never seen pyjamas at close quarters, and crowded round in admiration. I noticed even women on the outskirts of the crowd.

Dispersing it, I lay on my rush mat. An hour later I was coming to the conclusion that I was getting soft. There was a time when a night in a dry ditch was no hardship, and when such a lodging as the *fonduk* provided was comparative luxury. But now the hard floor found the nobbly ends of my bones, for the rush mat was thin. I turned a hundred times, but found no repose.

However, one sleepless night means nothing. The following evening I was sleepy and thus hopeful. My neighbours warned me that the night would be cool—their camel had invaded their room, and they made no move to expel it, since it brought

added warmth: thus my 'uniform', as they termed my pyjamas, might be inadequate.

They were right. In the darkness a sheep came quietly into my cubicle, and lay close beside me. Despite the much-advertised warming qualities of his coat, he appeared to be feeling the cold. Apart from entering my room without permission, his behaviour was exemplary. He made no noise, but occasionally, forgetting him, I was startled by the glow of two large eyes through the darkness. But not even his influence could induce warmth. I thought of Lyautey's famous dictum: "Morocco is a cold country with a hot sun." He was right. The combination of cold and hard floor destroyed all prospects of slumber.

One sleepless night is nothing, but two in succession are more trying, and the prospect of a third was discouraging. I was very active by day, and my mind demanded repose by night. Reluctantly I gave up my cell and transferred my bag to a small hotel in the French city. There I had a very comfortable bed, and would have slept soundly but for the noise of a dance band across the way.

VI

Historically Fez is unique in Morocco, but it lacks some of the charm of Marrakesh. Its dirty grey cannot compare with the warm brown of the southern city. The amazing thing is that Fez has survived at all, and is so unchanged. A *Fassis*, or man of Fez, of two or three centuries ago, could he return, would find his way or lose it with the same facility as he did in his lifetime.

Fez by night is much more attractive. The bright starlight outlined the ramparts, emphasizing their romance rather than their starkness. The mean streets suggested the Arabian Nights in the deep shadows, and the passing crowd had an air of mystery as men gathered their hoods about their faces in the evening cool.

The piles of dirt by the sides of the alleys were hidden in the long shadows. Even the smells were less exuberant. (In fairness, I must say that the Moroccan cities are far cleaner

and less odorous than those of any other Arab country.) Occasionally a fitful light streamed from the open door of a mosque. Often little groups of men squatted at a corner, often conversing, but sometimes in silence. It was quite easy to put the scene back a century and more. The black girl carrying the pitcher would then have been a slave, and there would have been no street lamp above. Otherwise the essentials of the scene would have been unchanged.

Probably the local medical officer of health would not share my views about the romance of Fez. The old city is shockingly overcrowded, and is a rare nursery for the tuberculosis germ. Town-planners in England, thinking of six houses to the acre, would shudder at Fez—with 500 people to the acre. Yet a fourth city is now planned, to the west of 'New' Fez. Work was in hand, and the inhabitants of a small *bidonville* were making anxious enquiries about the rents of the new houses.

For light relief I made excursions into the countryside, across the fertile plain. Mohammed complained of stomach trouble, and conveyed me to Sidi Harazem, where the waters are claimed to be beneficent. Then he heard of hot springs at Moulay Yacoub, further north, where he plunged gaily into the public pool.

Yet my recollections of Fez are mainly political: the city is rather like Oxford in its mélange of learning and industry. Some of its intellectuals have provided the ideas for the Istiqlal movement, and some of its business men have provided the cash. Such a combination is seldom happy, and my understanding of Moroccan aspirations was not always clarified as I moved from one contact to another. Yet there was no atmosphere of strife between French and Moroccans: hard words, but with a pacific background. No such situation could ever be classed as hopeless.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

BLACK SULTAN, WHITE *COLONS*

I

YET when I left Fez I plunged into the real storm centre of the Moroccan problem. Gone were the peasant strips of land or the tiny farms. Over the wide plain, the cornfields stretched vigorously to the limits of vision. Here orchards were carefully tended, fields intensively cultivated. Tidy farmhouses with barns replaced the apparently temporary Berber villages. For the next few days, in the region of Meknes and Sidi Slimane, I was in the domain of the French *colon*.

When the French assumed control of Morocco in 1912, their advance guard was of soldiers and administrators—rapidly followed by traders. Then came a number of agricultural settlers; they found that local production was very primitive, following traditional Arab methods out of date centuries ago. Most of the farms were small peasant holdings, but there were some enormous estates belonging to rich men and feudal chiefs. Moreover, there was a large area of state land—and a larger which might be justly called 'No Man's Land'. It had been fought over, its villages burned and its people massacred so often that it was now going to waste. The French took it over on behalf of the State, and then sold suitable areas to farmers, French and Moroccan. The Nationalist propaganda claims that 'ever since 1914 the protectorate authorities have been forcibly expropriating native peasants, and removing them from their land, especially in the most fertile areas'. This, in some form or other, is a standard complaint in most agricultural countries, especially where the land has been neglected. If it is true in Morocco, the French must have deliberately falsified their records so as to deceive enquiries—that is to say, in 1912 they must have foreseen the arguments of today. I have a great admiration for the

French, but I do not think that they are quite as far-sighted as that!

Some of the new colonists bought ground from the government—ground abandoned, but potentially good, and brought it back into cultivation. Others were allotted areas classed as near-desert—some had not been cultivated for hundreds of years. The French did the obvious thing: they looked for water, and broke up the ground. The results were impressive.

Some Moroccans learned their lesson, and wondered why they themselves had not thought of it. The early settlers, the *vieux Marocains*, did useful work in undertaking modern agriculture by practical example. True, they enjoyed two advantages, lack of which had stultified so many Moroccan efforts in the past. Both spelled security. In the past, if a Moroccan became prosperous, he was always subject to the whim of a sultan's cupidity: further, he had no peace on the plains, until the constant insurrections and civil wars were firmly checked.

Then came a second wave of colonists—soldiers who settled down in Morocco after army service there. Most of these wanted ready-made farms—and the subsequent transactions were freely distorted by propaganda. A Moroccan farmer, tempted by a high price, would sell his land. After a gay time in the nearest city, he would find himself penniless—and would rail at the Frenchman who had 'stolen' his land. This was a familiar Arab complaint against the Jews in Palestine.

After the second World War there were signs of a third 'invasion', but now the price of worked or workable land had so risen that only a man with adequate capital could consider the expenditure involved in a farm of any size.

The French records *do* show some cases which perhaps might at first sight be classed under the heading of 'expropriation'. They wished to encourage large-scale farming in Morocco: economically this system had every advantage, whether it be practised by individualists in America or by collective farmers in Russia. So, if a large estate were interrupted by a peasant plot, the man was given alternative land elsewhere, as near as possible to his original ground. There are many objections to such a compulsory procedure: but at least the peasant did get compensation: under previous Moroccan governments, had he

been in the way of a rich landowner, he would have lost his farm and probably his life as well.

Today there are about 400,000 Europeans, most of them French, in Morocco, and the vast majority traders, technicians or civil servants. Only 6,000 are farmers—with families, of course. Of these, 4,300 bought land from the former owners in ordinary transactions, while the rest took up 'allotments' of state lands, often reclaimed from desert conditions. The European settlers—90 per cent French—have developed their estates by the most modern mechanical techniques, and their farms are generally the most prosperous in Morocco.

Nevertheless, it is easy to appreciate another aspect of the Nationalist complaint. The 6,000 European farmers between them own about a million hectares—600,000 of arable land or plantations, 400,000 of rough grazing ground. By intensive farming, however, about 10,000 hectares of the latter are brought under cultivation year after year.

The total area of productive land in Morocco is 15,500,000 hectares—but this includes pasture land and territory at present neglected but capable of cultivation after irrigation or other work has been completed. The actual area under cultivation is a little over 5,000,000 hectares—again, the disastrous drought of 1945 caused a set-back. Thus, while 6,000 Europeans cultivate 600,000 hectares, 850,000 Moroccan peasants farm the remaining 4,500,000 hectares. As this still includes a number of very large farms—some running into thousands of acres—it is obvious that the average holding is very small. This almost condemns the peasant to primitive methods, reflected in his output. In hard wheat, for example, the peasant farm produces 5·87 quintals per hectare in an average year, the European farm in Morocco 7·69 quintals. In soft wheat the distinction is greater—Moroccan farms 5·47 quintals, European *colons* 9·75.

I qualified the peasant condemnation by the word 'almost'. The Moroccan does not take kindly to the idea of a collective farm. In this he is the universal peasant, glorying in the use of his land—though he may not own it, but rents it on a share-cropping basis. Gradually, however, the French are introducing co-operative ideas. Naturally, these must be adopted voluntarily. In some places the value of intensive mechanical agriculture has been demonstrated practically, and machinery beyond the purse

of an individual peasant is available to the co-operative effort of a village. Since the village usually includes men of a single tribe, the idea already has a working basis. Equally successful is the collective purchase of seeds, and the co-operative sale of produce. French experimental and 'pattern' farms have done very useful work.

The anti-French propaganda proclaims that only 50,000 hectares of new land have been brought under irrigation. This figure is already out of date, and will be multiplied several times when the new barrage systems are in full operation. Were I a Frenchman irritated by the bitter criticism of what my people had done, I should be tempted to retort by demanding to know what the Moroccans had done for themselves—for they still own 14 million acres of cultivable or otherwise productive ground. The real difference between the European and the Moroccan farmer is not to be reckoned in areas of land, but in the use he makes of it.

II

Since agriculture is Morocco's principal industry, we must obviously return to the subject after a glimpse at the region of the *colons*. Its capital, so to speak, is Meknes. And Meknes is one of the most Moroccan cities in Morocco.

Unlike Fez and Marrakesh, it was the creation not of a dynasty, but of a Berber tribe. The richness of its soil and adequacy of its water supply persuaded the long-nomad Meknessa to settle down. They built a series of villages, and began to cultivate the land. As other tribes grew jealous, the Meknessa built a city for protection: Meknes es Zeitoun, they called it—Meknes among the olives.

This was in the tenth century. Subsequent rulers took notice of the place, so useful for taxes or plunder, but it had fallen into decline when Moulay Ismail, the 'Black Sultan', the second of the Alouites, made it his capital in 1672.

This man was the most fantastic of the long succession of strange characters who occupied the Moorish throne. Like many of the others, he was a great builder. I stared in amazement at the miles of fortifications—not merely the walls enclosing the

city, but ruins stretching far out into the countryside. When the sultan raided, the whole of his army, the surrounding tribes, and his loot could find shelter behind strong defences. Even today there are huge open spaces *within* the city walls: in contrast with the appalling congestion of Fez, the new housing estates of Meknes present no problem—there is plenty of room.

There are glories of architecture like the Bab Mansour, a gateway designed by a renegade Christian architect. There are remains of palaces on a grand scale—Moulay Ismail had heard of Louis XIV and his palace at Versailles, and set himself to emulate it. One of his buildings is now in use as an officers' training college. Other notable buildings appear in most unexpected places, and the vast series of ramparts is never out of sight.

If the sultan's reputation rested on his building, it would be honoured. But his private life was beyond a megalomaniac's dreams. His concubines made Solomon's harem appear by comparison as a drawing-room party. Records of the time are scanty, but it is known that 867 of his children survived him. Small wonder that an entire quarter of Meknes is given up to his descendants! Even had there been income tax in Morocco he would have been exempted by virtue of his dependants, while if children's allowances had prevailed his 867 would have secured affluence. The number of children born to him must have been far larger, for he usually ordered his daughters to be strangled at birth, while any son who showed signs of ambition was ruthlessly liquidated.

Often by his father's hand. Pitiless, he gloried in bloodshed. Simply for amusement he would charge and transfix a slave with a lance. His favourite feat of prowess was to strike off the head of the man who held his stirrup while he swung into the saddle. For his building operations he used 30,000 men from jails and 25,000 Christian slaves—the huge crypt which formed their prison is still to be seen. Some were built in to the ramparts: the blood of others was mixed with the beaten earth. It is estimated that he slew 36,000 people with his own hand. And this monster had the temerity to ask Louis XIV for the hand of his daughter! (This was the Princess of Conti, born to the French monarch of Dumas' heroine, Louise de la Vallière.) Yet, with all his ferocity, he classed himself as a Puritan, and

addressed a reproach to James II when he gave his allegiance to the Roman Catholic faith.[1]

It was Moulay Ismail who first recruited the negro troops who became an integral part of the Moroccan forces. After their first establishment, the service became hereditary—for the soldiers were provided with wives. Few youngsters were reluctant, for the prospects of loot were always attractive.

Moulay built up this professional force to an army of 100,000 men. With its aid he was able to control a larger area of Morocco than most of his predecessors or any of his successors. I even heard fervent Moroccans acclaiming his grandeur—passing over his blood-lust, and commenting with approval on the order and security which he gave to Morocco: a few minutes later they were denouncing the French, who had also given order and security to the country.

III

One feature of modern Meknes is almost as fantastic as Moulay Ismail himself.

In a corner of the city near the Berdaine Gate is the *koubba* of Sidi Mohammed ben Aissa, the 'son of Jesus', and its patron saint. His repute was more than local, for he founded a Fraternity which still numbers its adherents by the thousand. Years earlier I had witnessed one of their ceremonies at Kairouan, in Tunisia. Unfortunately the period for the annual *moussem* at Meknes is mid-winter, so I did not see it. A local friend gave me a vivid description.

I knew something of the dramatic origin of the sect. Sidi Aissa in his missionary campaign attracted thousands of adherents—so many that he became suspicious of their sincerity. Thus he determined on a test. Appearing to the crowd before his house, he announced that the Prophet had directed him to make a blood sacrifice of his truest disciples. He invited his faithful believers to come inside to be killed.

[1] Readers who find my synopsis of his career incredible might care to consult a historian's account—*Black Sunrise*, by Wilfred Blunt. It could form the basis of a startling comparison between the state of Morocco and that of England—already past the Elizabethan and Stuart eras, and moving towards a new civilization.

A man volunteered: the door closed behind him. A terrible cry was heard by the crowd, and a trickle of blood appeared under the door. A second followed, and a third: the blood flowed more freely. By the time the fortieth believer had volunteered to be sacrificed, the rest of the crowd had disappeared.

Then Sidi Aissa came out with his forty proved disciples. He declared that Allah had given special powers to his followers —their blood might flow, but they would not die. A few incredulous declared that the blood below the door was that of slaughtered sheep, but others believed. Hence the origin of the sanguinary rites of the Fraternity's religious services: they are based on this legend.

At Kairouan there were lengthy prayers, then an interminable ritual dance until the men were roused to a state of fanatic ecstasy. One man pressed himself against a sword: only a thin line of blood showed. Another plunged a four-inch nail into the flesh of his thighs: again only the merest film of blood appeared. I did not pretend to understand, and I was too startled to think.

"Members of the Fraternity gather from all parts of North Africa," said my Meknes friend. "Many of them are long-haired and unkempt. They advance along the road towards the *koubba* in a dancing procession. It goes on for hours—little groups form, uttering strange cries and working themselves up into a frenzy. They sing, they dance—to a monotonous rhythm, but with a fierce motion. My own opinion is that they pass into a state of trance.[1]

"Some strip off their clothes in their frenzy." (I had seen this at Kairouan.) "Others make sacrifices—beheading a sheep, and dragging out its entrails with their bare hands. But the sequel to the dance is staggering. I saw men rush into beds of prickly cactus, and clasp the horrible shrub in a close embrace. One man ate prickly pear, his lips wet with blood. I have heard of them eating scorpions, and biting the heads off snakes, but did not see this. They are, by the way, famous as snake-charmers. At the highest moments of exaltation they strike themselves with a primitive weapon, an ancient hatchet—but sharp. An

[1] Philip Thornton, in *The Voice of Atlas*, gives an analysis of the Assouia dance, including a musical score.

ordinary man would die of the wounds, you would say, but these men do not. I saw one man bring down the chopper on his skull with real force, but he continued with his contortionist dance. It was incredible.

"Orthodox Moslems consider such practices as impious. Nor are these encouraged by the French—after all, though they don't want to interfere with religious observances, guardians of law and order must look askance at people who hack themselves —and sometimes their neighbours—with choppers."

"But they still come?"

"Oh, yes. The Sultan himself has discouraged their practices. I am told that the numbers are decreasing, but they still come by the thousand. Last December, though, I saw one significant incident. At a given moment, all the dancers rush to the *koubba* of their saint—all the men, that is. The women lie down in the road, as a carpet. The more the men tread on them, the more virtue they receive.

"In one party I saw an old man and his son, each with his wife. They were almost in a state of emotional intoxication when the signal was given. The women flung themselves to the ground. But the young man did not tread on his wife—I suspect that she was pregnant. Instead, he jumped lightly over her as he ran.

"But the old man noticed this—I could observe his annoyance. He turned from his own course to tread on the young woman, deliberately—and hard!

"Then I noticed the old woman. She seemed to be out of the path of most of the rushing men, so she crawled into it, so as to get well trodden on!"

"It is hard to understand."

"Yes. Theologians find traces of ancient religions in such forms of worship. There are even devout Moslems who believe that although God is so far above the world, a small portion of His divine spirit can enter into a man's heart—and can be passed on by his touch. You have encountered the *baraka*— the mystic power of blessing enjoyed by certain holy families, descendants of the Prophet.

"In spite of the orgies of the Aissoua—as you and I might call them—the basis of their creed is purely spiritual—absorption in God, so that wounds of the flesh do not wound the senses.

Their moral code is high: they recognize no authority but God and the saints. Their prayers breathe a passion devoted to God, a faith which could indeed transport a man into the ecstasy we have both remarked. Assuredly the ways of fervour are indeed strange."

"And what is the attitude of your local people?"

"The Jews are not allowed to approach. The Moroccans sneer —but *not* in front of the Aissoua!"

IV

Just to the north of Meknes is one of the most remarkable cities in North Africa. No Jews or Europeans are allowed to live there—the French colony of four people is planted outside the walls. Though allowed to visit the place by day, Europeans must leave before nightfall. It is a place sacred to all Moslems, and its annual *moussem* is an amazing spectacle, with tens of thousands of pilgrims camping in tents on the mountainside. Yet its streets are undistinguished, and its mosque not at all outstanding. The dramatic feature of Moulay Idriss, apart from its holy repute, is its situation, crowded on two rocky spurs of a mountain. It is not surprising that the city has been built irregularly, as if without plan: it *is* surprising on such a site that a city should or could be built at all.

It was founded by the father of the man who first built Fez. A descendant of Mohammed, Moulay Idriss left Mecca hurriedly to escape the persecutions organized by Haroun-el-Raschid, Caliph of Bagdad. He settled among the Moroccan Berbers, and by his family prestige, personality, and his sword, made himself a local chieftain, constantly augmenting his sphere of influence.

But Haroun-el-Raschid—who was not nearly as romantic as the legends about him—was not to be cheated of his prey. He sent a Jewish agent: this man pretended to be anxious to adopt the Moslem religion, and thus gained the exile's confidence. Then, at the first opportunity, the Jew poisoned him. This was before A.D. 800, but the Jews are still unpopular in the city. And it is worth while noting that Haroun-el-Raschid means Aaron the Just!

At the time of his death, Moulay Idriss had no heir. Two months later, however, his Berber wife bore a posthumous son, who in due course proceeded to establish the dynasty. Though he transferred its seat to Fez, his father's tomb in Moulay Idriss is famous. The holy character of the city is enhanced by the residence in it of over a thousand Sherifs, or descendants of the Prophet.

It was the first day of Ramadan, and my own Mohammed wanted to pray at the shrine and to buy some of the decorated holy candles whose manufacture is the leading industry of the city. We walked through the crazy streets, which occasionally degenerated into flights of steps, flanked by grey-white houses built in impossible situations. Mohammed was already feeling the first effects of the fast. It is not merely that he must not eat from sunrise to sunset: he must not smoke! He declared that smoking eased his stomach-ache, but when I offered him a bismuth lozenge instead, he explained that even this harmless corrective could not be taken until the sun had set.

However, he forgot his indisposition at our next halt, which was new to him. The Roman hold on Morocco was slight, but in the north they did build some garrison cities. Some have disappeared, their stones looted for building. This was the partial fate of Volubilis, the principal city, but its ruins indicate its extent and importance.

It was founded by the Carthaginians about 200 B.C. The Romans greatly extended it, but on their departure it fell into decay—for hundreds of years it earned no mention in contemporary records. The French have now excavated a wide area, and exposed the basis of the city.

Mohammed exclaimed in wonder at the pillars—and the heating system of the houses: then opened his eyes wide when I told him that the value of a famous statue of a dog discovered here would be about half a million francs. I had to restrain him from borrowing a shovel and starting to dig for another. To me the most interesting feature was a stone slab: its inscription recorded that in the second century A.D. a British legion garrisoned Volubilis! About the same time a Berber legion garrisoned Hadrian's Wall in Northern England—the Romans were adepts in using their subject races to hold each other down! Since legionaries seldom returned home, but usually settled in

the place of their military service, it is probable that Berber blood flows in British veins, and British in Berber.

V

Sidi Slimane, save for its name, was a French provincial town built in Morocco. Petitjean, its neighbour, was completely French, even to the name. Until 1925 the region about it was desert. Then the French introduced irrigation and planted trees. Now the area is part of the Moroccan granary. To add to its wealth, oil has been discovered near by—and the Americans have built a vast airfield. Hence there is no suggestion of unemployment!

There are plenty of Moroccan peasant farmers, but most men work for French *colons*. The farms range from 20 to 100 hectares —around Meknes there are many larger. The average farm of 50 hectares needs from 20 to 30 local helpers.

The atmosphere is easy: farmers and labourers are on the most friendly terms. Some of the workers live on the farms, others in adjacent villages. Their pay is good, by local standards —150 to 400 francs a day, plus rural privileges. Thus most of them have an 'allotment' sometimes as large as a peasant farm elsewhere. Workers are given a free allowance of wheat and other produce, with the right to buy more at half the standard price. They are allowed to borrow the farm machinery to cultivate their own plots.

As is common, the disturbing factor in a peaceful scene is the industrial invasion. Some men are attracted from the farms by the higher wages offered by the Americans or the oilmen. Others are more cautious.

"What is money?" one man asked. "The Americans would pay me more, but I would have to spend it to buy wheat—which I now get free."

His attitude was more sensible than that of others who gathered around. There were very few grumbles about local conditions, however.

"Of course, it is very nice to own your farm, and to work for yourself. But if the rains fail, you starve. Here I get paid every week, whatever the crops are like. And *my* wheat comes

first from the crop, before the *colon* can sell any. What is more, if I am in difficulty or sick, my *patron* is a friend—I have worked for him for twenty years."

There was no sign of revolution here, I decided. My next contact was a Frenchman, an inspector of farm taxes.

"I have seen the *tertib*, the taxation of peasant farms," I said. "But the Nationalists complain that the peasants have to pay a larger tax, proportionately, than do the French *colons*—that the French get a 50 per cent reduction in the tax on crops."

"Not quite right," he smiled. "There *is* a 50 per cent reduction, an incentive bonus. It is not given to a farmer because he is a Frenchman, but because he employs modern mechanized methods. If he farms in the primitive Moroccan style—as a few do—he pays the same as a Moroccan. On the other hand, if a Moroccan farms his land European fashion, he gets the 50 per cent reduction. That is to say, the bonus has nothing to do with nationality—it is economic."

After watching him at work—taking samples of crops so as to estimate the gross yield, as a basis for taxation—I called in at several farms. The second was a fair-sized estate owned by a Moroccan. He confirmed that he did indeed get the 50 per cent rebate.

"I would still farm European fashion, even without this reduction," he declared. "I learned the hard way. I was a peasant—I reaped with a sickle. Then I found that with a scythe I could do in one day what I did with a sickle in ten. So I progressed to machinery. My neighbours, men of my own tribe who stuck to the sickle, now work for me."

Yet in my journey about the *colon* area I did strike one jarring note—feeble now, perhaps, but potentially serious. Round about Meknes I saw some of the latest developments: corn silos, co-operatively owned: a factory for canning fruit and vegetables: a wine-pressing establishment, with huge cellars. Near by was an agricultural college, with French and Moroccan students, and a very interesting experiment in turning shepherds into cultivators. Eight thousand hectares of land long abandoned, save for the casual grazing of sheep and goats, are being reclaimed. It has been divided into farms of four or five hectares, and machinery is available for hire—payment being made after crops are sold. The productive increase has been striking. The

small area of land which was under cultivation used to yield up to 6 quintals a hectare—sometimes nothing at all. Now the crops range from 10 to 20 quintals. One man gleefully pointed out: "I can have machines from the central farm, sit down and do nothing, pay for the machines with a share of the crops, and still make far more than I did before!"

This was an example of a scheme which has done very useful work. Zones of tribal land long neglected have been selected as 'Sectors of Rural Modernization'. The total area envisaged is 440,000 hectares over an eight-year period. Some of the resultant farms are worked co-operatively, but where they include peasant holdings individual ownership still prevails.

Yet I noticed that some of the European farms in the area were very large. I found that they did not belong to *colons*, but to French companies. The proprietors of a canning factory would also own thousands of hectares of the ground which produced its supplies.

Economically, this method is at least as effective as that of the collective farm, but when the owners are of one nationality and the workers of another the objections are obvious. Further, the absentee landlord has never been a popular figure.

"It is not like working for a *colon*," said one labourer. "The manager is a good man—but he too has *his* manager. It is not the same."

Months earlier, in my native village, I had discussed the effects of nationalization with a friend, a miner, who was an enthusiast.

"There's one snag," he admitted. "In the old days, when we had a grievance—and we often had!—the boss was always there, and we could put it to him direct, and often get it righted. Now—paper to a civil servant! It's not quite the same!"

The point may be trivial, but the French would be wise to watch it. Economics by themselves are not enough. However good local conditions may be, it is never difficult to persuade people that they are being 'exploited' by men whom they do not know, and in whose goodwill they can have no confidence.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

SPANISH ZONE

I

WHILE, at the turn of the last century, the French were infiltrating into the Atlantic ports of Morocco, the Spaniards were equally busy along the Mediterrean coast. Moreover, before the French proclaimed their protectorate they had made a private bargain with the Spaniards, promising to sub-let to them a northern zone. It is only about 220 miles long with an average of 25 miles wide; it has cost Spain very dearly in blood and treasure, but has been a slight acquisition in the matter of prestige.

I took a rapid view of the Zone, for I had visited it previously. On the Atlantic coast are such towns as Larache, once a Portuguese settlement: on the Mediterranean is Ceuta, a port overspilled from Spain.[1]

The capital of Spanish Morocco is Tetuan, as picturesque as any town further south. The Spaniards have followed the French fashion, and have built their European town away from the native city.

The narrow streets of the old Tetuan are dominated by the *kasbah*, or castle. The shops are the usual Eastern alcoves.

[1] The Spaniards claim that the towns of Ceuta, Melilla, Alhucemas, Chafarinas and Peñon de Veles actually rank under Spanish sovereignty, since they were occupied before the protectorate was arranged. They are administered direct from Spain. A claim to colonial status is applied to the desert enclave of Ifni (740 square miles), in the south-west corner of Morocco. It has a population of only 42,000.

References to 'Spanish Morocco' are generally limited to the region in the north, about Tetuan. Technically, however, there is another region which is geographically a part of Morocco. This is another desert area, behind Cabo Yubi, with an area of 10,000 square miles but a population of only 12,000. It adjoins the colony of Rio de Oro, and is administered with it as part of Spanish Sahara.

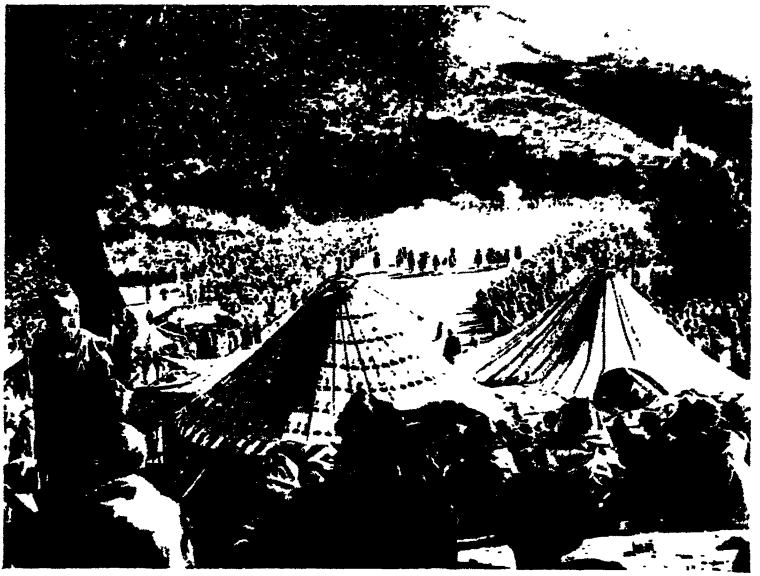
The area of the northern territory (excluding the towns mentioned) is 7,600 square miles, with an estimated population of 1,130,000.

32. Piper at the wedding

33. Berber peasant

34. Water-seller

35. Berber perambulator



36. Fantasia

37. Berber horsemen at Fez, February, 1951

Normally one street is devoted to a single trade, where craftsmen work at products whose character scarcely changes with the centuries. The poorer people live in shockingly overcrowded slums, but some of the merchants' houses are spacious and dignified, built about cool patios reminiscent of Spain. In some I found even more pertinent reminders. One man showed me a huge key, of a house in Seville: another the title deeds of property in Granada. These men were descendants of the Arabs who had been driven from Spain over four hundred years previously.

Every Friday the *khalifa* of the Sultan, and his cousin, rides in state from his palace to the central mosque. He has an escort of giant negro soldiers, and a somewhat incongruous brass band. The magistrates, religious leaders, and business men attend him —the brief ceremony is taken seriously, for it is clear evidence that Morocco is still legally an independent state, merely 'protected' by France and Spain.

Of the other towns of the region, none is as fascinating as Xauen. When the Moors were driven from Granada, they wandered disconsolate over the Barbary wastes. Suddenly they chanced on a green valley in the Riff mountains: this they adopted as the site of their new Granada.

Xauen became a Holy City, secluded from the outside world. The few Christians who reached it—mostly as slaves—never returned. It is claimed that not until 1922 did Christians freely enter Xauen. When I went there first, in 1936, my reception was not friendly.

Compared with its desolate surroundings, Xauen is a paradise. A great spring of cool water bursts from a mountainside, ample for all. With the powerful sun above, the good and well-watered earth produces luscious fruits in plenty—apricots, oranges and the like. Yet the greatest charm of Xauen, with all its picturesque corners and narrow streets, is the loveliest sound that Africa knows—the gentle sound of running water.

Moroccan villages in the Spanish zone, as elsewhere, differ vastly from the towns. Here are groups of primitive hovels, enclosed behind a palisade of prickly pear or flowering thorn. The huts are made of mud and thatch, small and dark. Furniture scarcely exists: a few rush mats serve as bedding. Life is at its simplest, and has hardly changed for centuries. Any

stranger is regarded with suspicion—a white man particularly so.

For the Spaniards have not been happy in their charge. In the historical section I mentioned their long and costly wars against the Riff Berbers under Abd-el-Krim. Not until French assistance made a pincer-movement possible were the Riffs subdued. Even now the Spanish hold over the region appears to be precarious. Economically the region lags far behind the French zone—and in some respects has not improved but worsened in the last twenty years. The French have been warring against Moroccan corruption: the Spaniards have to combat their own.

"I must say this, however," remarked a Moroccan business man who travelled a good deal in both zones. "The Spanish are incompetent, yes. In economic organization they are half a century behind the French. Yet in some ways we get on better with them. They are not aloof. They mingle freely with us—make friends with us. Maybe it is because Moorish blood flows in many Spanish veins. We feel closer to them—I refer especially to the ordinary people. They are a poor folk, and a hot-climate folk. So we have much in common."

II

In Spanish Morocco is a small enclave which has occasioned much argument in the past, and may provoke more. It has proved a bitter disappointment to those who pin their faith on close economic bonds between the nations. For Tangier was almost the first of the modern international ports, and it has not been very successful.

The area of the zone is only 225 square miles—one-third the size of London. Its situation, facing Gibraltar, early marked out its importance. The Portuguese and Spaniards held it in turn for long periods. For a short spell it was a British possession —part of the dowry of Catherine of Braganza on her marriage to Charles II. The government of the day had never heard of such ideas as 'the tutelage of backward races'. When they found that Tangier was a financial liability, they abandoned it to the Moors.

It became the seat of the Diplomatic Corps—since incursions into the interior were not very safe. The concentration of foreigners in Tangier led to the inevitable 'privileges', including not only economic advantages and judicial rights, but the opening of foreign schools and even of foreign post offices.

Thus, when France became virtual master of Morocco, Tangier was already a peculiar territory. This was recognized by the Algeciras Conference of 1906, and subsequently after the first World War. The sovereignty of the Sultan was confirmed: native and religious affairs were to be administered by his representative, the Mendub. For the rest, the representatives of a dozen countries participated in the administration. In practice, French influence was most powerful. French 'advised' the Mendub, and provided most of the capital for the local banks.

There was constant bickering between the nations involved—always more concerned with their own advantage than with that of Tangier. The budget was seldom balanced, and the development of the port was retarded—ships of any size have to lie outside the harbour. The only people unconcerned were the local Moors, who went about their business and ignored regulations issued by the International Assembly.

On the collapse of France, on June 14th, 1940, Spanish forces violated the Statute and occupied Tangier. It was announced that this move was to protect the neutrality of Tangier, and that it was provisional. Britain made a formal protest, but at that time was scarcely in a position to do more. Further, there was a possibility that Italy or Germany might occupy Tangier if Spain did not, so the situation was temporarily accepted.

In spite of all her assurances, however, Spain took step after step to establish her authority. At that time the victory of the Axis seemed certain, and Spain was preparing to stay in Tangier.

The defeat of Germany naturally cancelled such ambitions. Spain was called upon to evacuate Tangier, and reluctantly did so. A subsequent conference restored substantially the old unwieldy administration.

Tangier could give the world a practical example of international rule, a chance to put into practice the principles declared by the United Nations Charter. Instead, to date, it

has been little more than a seismograph registering the stresses of current power politics. Even the Russian feud with the Western democracies has been faithfully reflected in the policies of its 'international' rulers. Economically it is no advertisement for its rulers. Luxury hotels are crowded, mostly with foreign refugees of dubious origin, who alone can afford the fabulous prices demanded—no questions are asked as to the source of their wealth. Almost anything the world produces can be bought in Tangier, but its principal trade is in currency. Speculation is the leading business, with francs, dollars and pounds replacing the roulette ball or the football coupon.

It is usual to blame the Jews for the idiosyncrasies of finance, but they hold no monopoly in Tangier. I must, however, record with admiration the ingenuity of one Jewish private banker who took advantage of the peculiar status of the port. He has several sons, and has obtained a different nationality for each! Thus, in any dispute, at least one consul—probably more—can be brought in to protect the family interests.

Attracted by the absence of income tax, people of many nationalities have chosen Tangier as a place for retirement. Few of them are happy in its uneasy atmosphere of intrigue. "Moroccan towns are hybrids," said an English resident, "a contrast of Europe and Africa, side by side. But Tangier is a bastard."

The local Moroccans, as in the Spanish zone, work for wretched wages on a low standard of living, and have many legitimate complaints. The Moroccan Nationalists who rail against the French should glance at the Spanish zone and Tangier.

As both zones are reasonably well supplied with ports, there is no real case for the special status of Tangier. It is a moral and economic blot on the Moroccan landscape. The trouble is that none of the many powers concerned is willing to give up its 'rights'.

III

The Spaniards, a proud people, have always resented the French supremacy in Morocco. The international status of

Tangier was denounced as a direct insult, since the majority of the European residents there were Spanish. Since the advent of General Franco the Spanish policy has been fairly consistent —to irritate the French as systematically as was possible.

Its propaganda compared Spanish 'protectiveness' with French 'colonialism'—a comparison which, if made on the spot, would arouse awkward repercussions for Spain. Neither in economy nor administration can the Spanish zone be compared to the French. But pin-pricks were possible. Istiqlal leaders exiled by the French were welcomed in the Spanish zone—until they made it too clear that when they talked about independence they meant the whole of Morocco. The Sultan's *khalifa* paid an official visit to General Franco in January 1952, and was received with great honour. Even before this, Franco had sent his Foreign Minister on a goodwill tour of the Arab states. There was talk about Spanish support against 'imperialism', and the official Spanish press waxed lyrical about Persia and Egypt. This was playing with fire with a vengeance, and one day Franco's own words may be quoted against him. At least his objective is quite clear. His support of Arab 'aspirations' is merely a bribe to induce malcontents to support his South American friends over the question of Spain's admission to the United Nations.

In Tangier, too, Franco has taken provocative action. March 30th, 1952, was the fortieth anniversary of the protectorates. Istiqlal called for a day of mourning. We shall consider this in the French zone later, but in Tangier the disturbances were more serious. The Nationalist demonstrators, as usual, were joined by a mob intent on loot; according to the Belgian chief of police, hundreds came in from the mountain regions of the Spanish zone—a mere hint of prospective pillage would be quite enough to arouse them. The authorities appear to have been taken by surprise, and security precautions were inadequate. What began as a Nationalist demonstration soon degenerated into anti-European riots. Before order could be restored six people had been killed and more than a hundred injured.

General Franco promptly suggested that if the Tangier chief of police had been Spanish—as was the custom until 1945—the riots would not have occurred. Some people agreed with him! They pointed out that the bulk of the rioters came from the

Spanish zone, and could not have moved without Spanish connivance. Others, less delicate of speech, accused Spain outright of provoking the riots.

Franco went on to put the International régime in an awkward situation. He pointed out that when international control had been restored in 1945, the new charter for Tangier had been given only six months' validity. This was quite true—at that time the powers appeared to believe that Franco would have fallen before the six months had elapsed! Now he demanded a conference to regularize the position. This might have resulted in a piqant situation, for Russia is one of the governing powers: a clash between Stalin and Franco might be amusing, but would scarcely stabilize a disturbed régime.

For the moment, then, Franco must pocket his pride. This seems to be his permanent fate in Morocco. He may flirt with Nationalist leaders in order to annoy the French, but he should know quite well that if the French are ever expelled from Morocco, the Spanish will leave abruptly the same day—or even the day before.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

MAROQUINERIE

I

By this useful word the French describe diverse productions of the Moroccan artisans in leather. It may serve to cover a selection of entries from my notebooks which do not fall into a conventional classification. Some are serious, but many provide light relief—while affording a comment on some aspect of Morocco.

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While I talked with Dimancescu in Marrakesh, his daughter Sandra returned from a party in a local palace, gathered to welcome a new baby. She reported that the women, always sequestered, had no subjects of conversation beyond their husbands and children. They were covered with jewellery, and even carried reserve specimens to lay out on their knees when they sat down. The idea was, of course, to demonstrate how much their husbands loved them.

Despite the veil and the seclusion, the position of Arab women is much higher than might be imagined. From within, they exercise a great influence on family affairs.

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In many of the great houses I found women servants referred to as 'Mauresques'. Most were negresses, or near, and were the daughters of slaves. Today they are technically free, but are attached to the household. They get no pay, but are fed, clothed, housed, and kindly treated. 'Working daughters', I heard them described. I was able to talk with one or two of them, and found them quite happy. They had no wish to go out into the world, preferring their present modest security.

Some of the veils of the Arab women are very thin. Even the heavily veiled women enjoy one advantage—the men may not be able to see them, but they can see the men.

More effective than the veil is the shapeless robe which completely disguises any beauty of figure—always more seductive than a pretty face. Although attempts to 'emancipate' women have so far failed—the Sultan's daughter attempted to lead one movement—there are signs of revolt. And of sheer absurdity: I saw a car, driven by a negro chauffeur, arrive at a bathing beach. Three heavily veiled and clothed girls emerged, went into a hut and reappeared in the scanty apparel known as 'Bikinis'.

If any young man has any doubt about the shape of the female form, a bathing beach frequented by French women would soon educate him. For closer acquaintance, there is the prostitutes' quarter in every town—or, if this does not appeal, an ample selection of 'art' photographs of nude women.

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In a narrow street in Fez a man carrying long strips of iron turned a corner clumsily, and ripped my jacket. A tailor's shop was immediately available, and the proprietor patched me up admirably.

A Moroccan friend looked at me solemnly. "You do not know what prestige you have just gained for yourself or for your race," he said. "The Koran exhorts us to calm and patience at times of difficulty, but we are sadly lacking in restraint, and fly too readily into temper. But you did not rave at this clumsy man——"

"He could scarcely help it. Blame rather the man who gave him such a load—or the man who built such a street."

"As you will. But to us a gentleman is one who in moments of justifiable anger does not raise his voice."

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As I passed by the shrine of Moulay Idriss, I noticed that it contained a double row of grandfather clocks. True, mosques throughout the Islamic world are generally well supplied with

timekeepers, for it is important to know the hour for the appropriate prayers: in Fez I had seen many sundials. Yet such an array of clocks warranted enquiry.

"You know that our merchants have long had business dealings with England? With Manchester, especially—there are still half a dozen local firms which have offices there, to sell Moroccan goods and buy English. Today it is a routine day's flight, but in older times it could be a perilous journey. So a merchant, before he set off, would make a pledge to enrich the shrine on his safe return. A favourite gift was a clock—you will find that most of the clocks in the shrine are English."

"I noticed that many were not going——"

"Yes. Of course, maybe they have not been wound up."

"—and others showed different hours."

"We are not very good at maintenance, you know. I do not think you need blame the quality of the English clocks."

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It is true that the Moroccans are not good conservators—neither of modern machinery nor of their own buildings. They love gadgets, but soon neglect them.

In one pasha's palace I found a lift—for a single upper floor. However, it was not working.

The pasha had added a small wing for European visitors. He instructed his workmen to add a bathroom to each bedroom. This was done, and the plumber was especially proud of his handiwork. In each bathroom there were two baths—one with hot water, one with cold!

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Yet this trifling idiosyncrasy was easily outdistanced by an experience of Dimancescu. When he took his Arab house in the *medina* at Marrakesh, it had no sanitary convenience. He called in a Moroccan plumber, and instructed him to install a bathroom and lavatory.

The work was approaching completion when Dimancescu received a telegram from a well-known and popular British diplomat announcing his arrival the following day. With a

little overtime the plumber completed his task, and cheerfully put on the fire to supply the hot water.

"Well, you'll need a bath after such a long journey," Dimancescu greeted the diplomat.

"Yes, but first—is there a toilet?"

"Yes. Just installed—you can christen it."

Two minutes later he heard the sound of the chain, followed by cries of pain and anger. The diplomat appeared in the hall, bereft of his usual dignity, for his trousers sagged about his knees. Even when his natural calm reasserted itself, he refused to sit down. His complaint was justified: the Arab plumber had connected the very hot water to the lavatory cistern!

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The gadget king was the late Sultan Abd-el-Aziz. Indeed, his passion for mechanical novelties was a direct cause of his loss of the throne, for he neglected state business in their favour. He bought a motor-boat for a pool a hundred yards long: and laid down a light railway for a journey of two miles. His palace was filled with dozens of cameras, 'magic' lanterns, and mechanical nightingales. But his prize exhibit was a tandem tricycle. The Sultan occupied the ornate back seat—and employed his aged prime minister to pedal him round the palace grounds!

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I gave the Nationalist propagandists a bad mark at Meknes. On the historic pillars of the Christian slaves' prison they had copied a decadent Western fashion, and had scrawled Istiqlal slogans on the stones.

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There was a trade fair and exhibition at Meknes, with the inevitable fun-fair attached. Mohammed cooed when he saw children on a merry-go-round, driven by a man turning a handle. But he was concerned, and reproved the man severely for driving the children too fast!

For my part, I was intrigued by the sight of women on the 'flying chairs'—their skirts afloat in the breeze, but their veils held firmly in place.

At night there was a torchlight procession, headed by the band of the Foreign Legion. When I commented to an officer on the excellence of its performance, he said: "Of course. Most of the musicians are Germans."

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More than once in my journey I chanced across units of the Foreign Legion. In most cases they were training battalions or cadres, for North Africa has ceased to be the happy fighting ground for this famous corps.

The French have always employed mercenaries in their armies, often very successfully. The *Légion Étrangére* as we know it today was founded by Louis Philippe in 1831. It distinguished itself in the Algerian campaigns and in the ill-fated Mexican adventure. As the French Empire developed, Senegal, Madagascar and Indo-China were added to its battle honours: so was Morocco, for it played a vital part in the 'war of pacification'.

No regiment was ever more publicized. Romantic slush was poured out by the bookful. The Legion was apparently entirely manned by strong heroes escaping from unhappy love-affairs: actually, far more recruits escaped from the police. In fact, however, the bulk of the men joined from sheer love of adventure, as an instinctive protest against the artificial restraints of the modern world.

The 'Iron Discipline' of the Legion is another fiction. A Guards' sergeant from Caterham would provoke an immediate mutiny. There is very little 'spit and polish', and when off duty the men are remarkably free.

A man joins the Legion on a five-year engagement. He can continue if he so wishes, and at the end of fifteen years he is entitled to a pension—and to French nationality, should he so desire. He is eligible for promotion to commissioned rank—some of the most successful officers have in fact been foreigners.

The Germans have usually provided the bulk of the men—today, seventy per cent of the Legion's strength. Today it is alleged that the regiment is not as fine as it used to be—that

the Germans affect to despise the French. Nevertheless, they are doing their share of the fighting in Indo-China.

In Morocco their place has been taken by Goumiers, native troops. French officers are as enthusiastic about them as ours about the Gurkhas. "They can be dealt with like children, but they fight like devils."

There is one practical argument which the French are able to use in the Nationalist battle of words: whenever the French announce a thousand vacancies in the ranks of the Goumiers, they get ten thousand applications.

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Morocco appears constantly in ancient myth and legend. Atlas may have been suggested by the strength of the mountain ridge which bears his name.

Near Alcazar—the Spanish form of Kasr-el-Keber—is the traditional site of the Garden of Hesperides. The golden apples may really have been oranges! Certainly I found no trace of the dragon.

Further north, however, near Tangier, I found the caves of Hercules. For centuries their walls have been used by stone-masons to hack out the grindstones for flour mills, but according to local legend they formed the grave of Antæus, the giant who lost his strength when lifted clear of his mother earth. Hercules carried his body to the caves for burial—if you doubt this, there are the marks of the strong man's feet on the floor of the cave.

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The cinema has invaded Morocco, but is still confined to the towns. While French, American and British films are shown, the Moroccans prefer Egyptian—not because they are better, but because the speech is Arabic.

I saw one or two examples of them. The 'musical' was interminably boring, and the 'drama' had a political slant—a suggestion of the anti-foreign outlook. This tendency is likely to recur, and could have an influence far beyond the artistic deserts of the films.

European visitors to countries of Arab traditions usually complain of cruelty to animals. This is not so prevalent in Morocco, though admittedly many domestic animals are overworked and some neglected.

In Marrakesh I saw little birds like sparrows, but with blue-grey plumage, flying boldly into the courts of the houses, and hopping without fear into the rooms. They are virtually held to be sacred, and are so used to being unharmed that they *seek* the company of human beings.

And in Fez I saw a sight which reminded me of China. The saunterers in the public gardens were carrying their birds in cages, to give them an airing.

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The 14,000 Americans employed in the air bases in Morocco have had very small effect on local ideas. The Americans claim that the art of being 'good mixers' is their national characteristic. This is true of the average American as an individual, but not true of Americans in the mass. Where a few are gathered together, they seldom evince any great interest in other peoples' ways of life, and less desire to share it: instead, they plant a corner of America in a foreign land.

"After all, the three camps are a long way from anywhere," said an American officer. "When the lads first came over, they wanted to get around. But you can get tired of walking round *souks*. And maybe they found the local outlook on women somewhat restrictive. So now they stay in camp and go to the movies or play baseball, like they would at home."

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The bicycle is capturing Morocco. Casablanca is almost as dangerous as Oxford—perhaps more so, for the local rider has little skill and less road sense.

The innovation is penetrating the country regions; within a couple of generations the bicycle may replace the peasant's donkey. The main roads are very good indeed, secondary roads ridable, and even the local tracks passable for eight or nine months of the year.

Most of the machines are French, but I brought the opportunity to the notice of British manufacturers. True, there are some financial difficulties to be overcome, for Britain is not the only country with currency problems. The normal quota for British imports is small, but there is always E.F.A.C.

When a Moroccan trader sells abroad, he is allowed to retain from 10 to 25 per cent of the foreign currency he gains: he can employ it for his own use, or pass it on to someone else—he usually does, at a premium. This is E.F.A.C., and it leads to a lively traffic—quite legal, of course. I was told that local agents of many British firms had not always been enterprising in securing their share. "Anyway, there are always plenty of pounds—and dollars—at Tangier!" said a business man.

Any bicycle manufacturer who wants to enter the Moroccan market should bear in mind a few elementary considerations. The clumsy black machine of tradition will suit the peasant, but not the young man in the town. He wants a bicycle in gay colours: he loves such gadgets as gears and dynamo lamps: he may not be a good rider, but he likes his machine to look like a racer. A study of local conditions would yield good results. Our prices are competitive: ordinary French bicycles were on sale at from £14 to £18.

"Before the war we used to buy a lot from Japan—at £2 each," said a cycle dealer. "No, they weren't very good, but they did the job—riding to work—and the price fitted our pockets. They haven't yet reappeared. The cheapest bicycles we get today come from Germany!"

One of those I borrowed must have been a veteran of the Japanese trade war. I found it almost as easy to walk, save downhill: then its brakes wouldn't work!

"If you send us bicycles, remember one thing," a dealer remarked. "No rat-trap pedals—some of our people ride barefooted!"

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While thousands of Moroccans emigrate to France and Algeria to find lucrative work, most of them come back. To them there is no place like Morocco.

Hollywood does not act as a recruiting agent. The Moroccans generally regard the American way of life, as shown on the films, as amusing, but they would not care to live it themselves. I did find a few young people who were attracted, however—by the 'Westerns'!

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Istiqlal members seemed to assume automatically that all pashas and caids were corrupt. Some of them are. But at Fez I heard charges of corruption against the French authorities as well. This might not be impossible, but I asked for details of actual cases.

After an interval of some days I returned to the point, but the only information I gained was that in one town a French captain had been withdrawn at very short notice, and without explanation: therefore, it was argued, there must have been corruption involved. I made enquiries and found that the facts were as quoted. But the sudden transfer of the captain to other duties had no basis of corruption, but an unfortunate indiscretion with the colonel's wife!

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A *vieux Marocain*—that is, one of the early French settlers: "I was here *before* the protectorate—my father established this farm. Happy? I've never heard a hard word.

"I remember one comedy which would amuse you. There was a time, you will remember, when England had ambitions in Morocco. Once you sent an imposing mission to the Sultan, with presents. One of the officers was of your Guards. He was an enormous man, and was greatly admired by the crowd—especially for his busby.

"'But what is it?' people began to murmur.

"In the procession was a newspaper correspondent who knew the Arab lands and knew that a question should not be left unanswered. In front of him stood a water-seller, his goatskin water-bag on his back: this presented an idea.

"'That is an English water-bag,' he called out. 'This officer is a very gallant man. He put out a fire in his town, and his

sultan now allows him to wear his water-bag on his head, as a sign of honour.'

"The crowd nodded in appreciation at this most logical explanation of the novel headgear."

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The *colon's* neighbour: "I am a comparative newcomer—1928. I suppose this Nationalist business is genuine, but I remember that I was weeks in the country before I knew that there *was* a Sultan."

The Nationalists, of course, would find quite a different reason for his ignorance!

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For centuries Morocco was famous for its art and crafts—which were for so long her only form of 'industry'. In recent years, under the impact of modern economic forces, there has been a tendency towards breakdown in traditional practices, for the hand-made article cannot compete financially with the factory product. The temptation to the artisan is then obvious—to produce an inferior article at a lower price. This process has been known in nearly all countries.

The French recognized that the Moroccan artisan and his products were part of the national way of life, and are attempting to preserve them by keeping up their quality. The Service of Moroccan Arts and Crafts stipulates specified standards, rigorously maintained—you may take the carpet you have bought to its local agency for examination and grading. It has reorganized and strengthened the old trade guilds, orienting them towards co-operative forms. These can buy raw materials more cheaply in bulk and can sell the products more effectively. Further, simple machinery has been introduced where possible—for it is recognized that eventually the artisan is bound to be merged in industry: it is hoped to make of him the skilled worker of his trade. Its local museums help to preserve traditional designs, and a gentle propaganda emphasizes the importance of Moroccan arts and crafts in the general pattern of local life.

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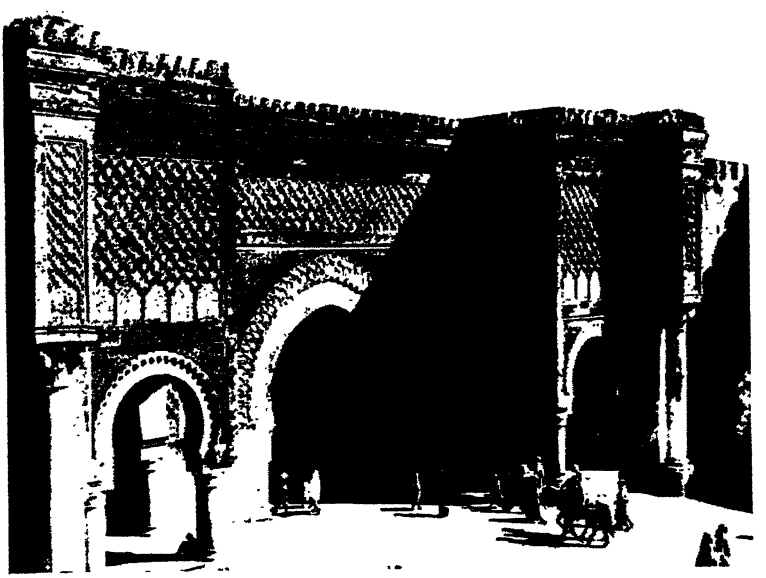
38. Aissoua woman near frenzy

39. In a market place



40. Moroccan glory—Bab Mansour, Meknes

41. A street in Tetuan

42. A *Souk* in Fez

It is not difficult to find enthusiasts in Morocco—but most of them are French. The Moroccans have very few fervencies outside their religion.

In a country town I met a Frenchman who was an expert on rural banks.

"After a slow beginning, progress is now encouraging," he said. "Imagine, agricultural economy here had scarcely changed in 2,000 years—the peasant with his wooden plough pulled by a mule and a donkey, reaping his poor crop by sickle, beating out the corn by the 'Arab chariot' or by driving his animals round and round over the sheaves, and then winnowing in the wind. Yes, I know, you will see that on half a million Moroccan farms today.

"Further, the farms were so small and the rains so unreliable that one failure plunged the peasant into heavy debt, from which he seldom recovered. The village Jew is decried, but he had his uses—he was an essential part of the old economy.

"Now we have fostered Native Provident Societies—to date, sixty-five of them. We adapted them from similar successful organizations in Algeria. They are, in a way, a super-co-operative society. They group the peasants of their region, make loans for development, seeds, farm machinery, and so on: they also sell the produce. They may even trade agricultural products direct against manufactured goods. The loans are repayable in crops: if you want to work it out in money, the interest rate is three per cent.

"The Moroccan Central Loans and Provident Bank supports the Societies financially. There are also Regional Banks which make loans direct to the larger farmers.

"In addition, we have out-and-out Agricultural Co-operatives. Through these, also, loans are available, and peasants co-operate in the use of farm machinery.

"These are for the Moroccans. There are special agricultural banks for the French *colons*.

"We have had one big difficulty—to persuade Moroccans to invest in banks, when they can. Their religion forbids usury—they will borrow, but not lend at interest. Hence the Jews."

"Could you not persuade some of the wealthier Moroccans to lend money and refuse to accept the interest?" I suggested.

"In one or two cases that has actually happened!" he chuckled.

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A Moroccan merchant in Casablanca made an interesting comment on the particularly strong backing of Istiqlal by the commercial circles of Fez. "At one time Fez was the centre of Moroccan business. Now it has lost this distinction to Casablanca. So the Fassis are jealous. They don't like to see men in other towns making money—they consider it *their* prerogative. So if the party they backed attained power, they might be able to arrange things so that Fez recovered its superiority. Yes, I dare say this idea seems strange to a European mind, but it is quite logical to a Moroccan."

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My acquaintance continued: "There is one bad effect of all this Nationalist business. It is hitting the tourist trade. Even Fez is becoming nervous. After all, American tourists don't want to walk into the middle of riots."

I can assure them that they won't. There is far less crime and disturbance in the whole of Morocco than in Chicago. All tourists will receive a cordial welcome from all Moroccans, including the Istiqlal leaders: indeed, especially the Istiqlal leaders.

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The same: "As you know, quite a number of Moroccans emigrate to France to work. Most of them do well, save their money, and then come back home.

"Yet I can't complain because the French regulate emigration. They can't have the labour market flooded—their own workers would have something to say about that! And there used to be a nasty traffic in prostitutes.

"There's another thing—I found it out once to my cost in Paris. As I said, the overwhelming majority of our people are well behaved and good workers. But some of them lose their

heads when confronted with the temptations of a European city —and there are plenty, to an immature mind, you'll agree. I regret to say that North Africa is only too well represented among the criminals of Paris. Not just Morocco, you understand—Algeria is even better represented. Or should it be worse?"

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A French trade union official at Casablanca: "A good trade union is a democratic organization. It can, and should, bring the best of the workers to the front. To date we haven't been so lucky with the Moroccans. After all, the cities often drain off the worst of the villagers, not the best. The throw-out of a tribe comes to Casablanca. He may have few scruples, but he can shout, and that counts among the inarticulate. So he sets himself up as a labour leader! He's at least as much trouble to us as to the employers."

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A young Frenchman: "I must say that I resent the intrusion of the political business into sports. The Istiqlal people are trying to ensure football teams of Moroccans only—not mixed. And when a Moroccan team beats a French one—as it often does—the Nationalists among the crowd make the sort of row you would expect after a war!"

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A Moroccan working man: "The Istiqlal leaders are fond of pointing to the sudden wealth acquired by pashas and caids. Maybe they are right, but *we* also talk about the sudden wealth which *they* themselves manage to attain. Where does it come from? Not from bribes, like the pashas. But where do all the collections go?"

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I met a man who was an agent of an American financial corporation. He said that his company had a hundred million

dollars ready to invest in Moroccan irrigation, but that the French were putting up obstacles. Since irrigation is one of the essential methods of raising agricultural production, I pursued the issue with a responsible official at Rabat.

"Yes, at first sight it is an attractive prospect," he agreed. "We are short of capital and machinery, while here the Americans offer both. But there is one overwhelming difficulty—the American company wants to run the scheme at a profit.

"Now I am not one of those people who believe that it is wicked to make a profit—but it cannot be done in irrigation. In our enterprises we carry the capital charges ourselves, and base the cost of the water supplies only on running costs. The American company would, of course, have to consider its capital charges as well. This would make the price of the water far beyond the reach of the Moroccan peasant. What the Americans want to do is to establish large-scale French farms, with which they could do business. But you can imagine that this is not a development we want to encourage at a moment like this!"

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A merchant in Fez: "Yes, I gather that you Europeans are scornful of the way we treat our women, as you put it. A friend of mine was so impressed by the conversation of some French friends that he decided to take his wife for a ride in his car. But she was so frightened by the noise of the streets that she screamed all the time and had to be taken back to the house."

I gathered that she had not previously left the house since her marriage twenty years earlier: thus the incident did not appear to prove anything.

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A professor of the Karaouine University told me a legend which was new to me.

When Allah was creating man, he made dough, shaped it, and put it in the oven. After a day and a night he took out his handiwork. The man was white and soft.

"Ah, I haven't cooked him enough," Allah pondered.

So he mixed more dough, and put it in the oven for a whole week. Out came a smelly black man.

"Alas, I have cooked him too much!"

So Allah tried again, and this time left the dough in the oven for three days. There emerged from the oven a brown man, fit and strong. So Allah sat back content: he had achieved perfection.

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The Arab barb is a magnificent cavalry horse, and in the old days the Berber horseman was the master of the battlefield.

Today he has to make do with an occasional 'fantasia', or 'powder play'. I missed the more spectacular exhibitions, but tribesmen near Azrou kindly staged a rehearsal to show me what happened. The demonstration is founded on Berber tactics of centuries ago: then they would gallop at full speed towards the enemy, swing to the left or right as they approached, discharging their guns while still at full gallop.

So today a line of horsemen charges at full gallop towards a crowd of spectators, yelling fiercely and discharging their rifles into the air. At the last second, when within a few feet of the crowd, they pull up abruptly. From the demonstration staged for my benefit, I should say that it could be thrilling.

II

Most of the topographical books on Morocco were published before the war. This does not necessarily put them completely out of date—save for the French innovations, a description of Fez a hundred years ago would be reasonably accurate today. A few practical notes may, however, be of value to the intending traveller.

The best approach is by air. There are daily services: Paris to Casablanca in six hours' flying time: the return fare is about £60.

Or you may journey by rail or road across France and Spain to Gibraltar or Algeciras, thence by boat to Tangier or Ceuta. Tangier is the more convenient, as it has a direct railway line to the principal cities of French Morocco.

French maritime companies run boat services from Bordeaux, Port Vendres and Marseilles. Details are given in the *Michelin Guide*. Direct access by sea from England is, however, possible —the usual difficulty is to obtain berths. Many ships of the P. & O., Union Castle and British-India lines from London call at Tangier: so do those of Rotterdam Lloyd from Southampton. In addition, trading ships ply direct to Casablanca, and most of them carry a few passengers. The MacAndrew Line from London, and Moss Hutchinson and the Blue Funnel Line from Liverpool run occasional services: there are casual journeys by tramp steamers—a shipping agent should be consulted.

With a British passport you may land at Tangier, but for the French and Spanish zones a visa is necessary from the respective consulates in London.

July, August and September are very hot, and if the rains come November, February and March are their favourite months. All other periods are delightful. The coastal and mountain regions are seldom too hot, and the nights are usually cool. Special clothing is unnecessary: that which suits an English summer will pass in Morocco—with woollens for the evenings.

The main railway line runs to Meknes and Fez, then eastwards to Algeria: a line branches off north of Meknes for Rabat, Casablanca, and Marrakesh. In addition, there is an adequate motor-coach service, both long distance and local. Motorists will find conditions of entry reasonable, and readily arranged through the A.A. or R.A.C. Petrol is expensive, and distances between garages large. There are very few roadside stations in the rural areas.

The hotels range from the establishments *de luxe*—where you may pay 2,000 francs for room alone—to humbler hostelries. The average standard is very good indeed. In the tourist season the hotels in the principal centres get very full, and it is advisable to book in advance. When I moved from the *fonduk* at Fez I went to five small hotels before I found accommodation.

With most towns separated by wide expanses of near-desert, the travellers cannot expect the wayside café which is so welcome a feature of France. A book published in Rabat is useful: *Guide Gastronomique et Hotelier du Maroc*, by Odette

Pannetier. With its aid you can calculate exactly how far you have to go to get a drink—or a meal. The water in towns is excellent, but in the *bled* a brook is used for so many purposes that its water should be regarded with caution: certainly it should be boiled before use. I heard fearful stories of the dangers of Moroccan vegetables, but I ate them without stint and without harm. If invited to a Moroccan meal, it is rude *not* to eat. I dislike tea intensely, and mint tea more than other varieties, but I had to swallow quarts of it in the interests of ordinary courtesy. On a formal call, when you have drunk your third glass of tea it is time to go.

I have said that entry to the mosques is rigorously prohibited to infidels. Even a surreptitious glance through the door may occasion hard feelings. Naturally, the peculiar position of women must also be remembered. Apart from these items, manners in Morocco are amazingly free—there is little or none of the dislike of photography, for example, which is encountered in some Moslem countries.

III

Books in English about Morocco are few. I have referred to one or two in the text. Rom Landau has written three: *Invitation to Morocco* (Faber), *The Beauty of Morocco* (Evans) and *Moroccan Journal* (Hale). He writes easily and interestingly, but since he has allowed himself to become the apologist for Istiqlal his political comments should be treated with reserve.

I enjoyed *A Vision of Morocco*, by V. C. Scott O'Connor (Thornton Butterworth) and *The Fire of Desert Folk*, by F. Ossendowski (Allen & Unwin). Pierre Loti's *Morocco* dates, but it is as readable as ever: so is Cunningham Grahame's *Mogreb-el-Acksa*. The works of Dr. Edward Westermarck are authoritative on the subject of Moroccan customs and superstitions.

Political students should read *Morocco*, a lengthy pamphlet published by the World Muslim Conference, 18 Eccleston Square, London, S.W.1. It is a propaganda publication, but, among its anti-French vehemence and its rosy pictures of old Morocco, the Istiqlal case can be discerned. It was formally

presented to me at Istiqlal headquarters at Rabat, so is entitled to be considered as an authentic presentation of their cause.

I have seen no guide book in English published since the war. The best available is *Present Day Morocco*, by O. H. Warne (Allen & Unwin). It includes a good list of older books on the subject. As good as a guide book is *Things Seen in Morocco*, by L. E. Bickerstaffe (Seeley Service), a very good example of a famous series. Yet by far the best handy guide is that published by Michelin, in French. Seldom has so much interest and practical information been packed into so short a space. Michelin also publish two maps, numbers 170 and 171, which cover Morocco adequately for general touring purposes.

People who can read in French have a very wide range of literature at their disposal. The books by the brothers Tharaud are of great interest: and the pictorial topographical publications of the Grenoble-Arthaud press are excellent.

In most towns you will find someone who can speak English. To learn Arabic would be at least a five-year task, but at least you ought to know a little French before wandering at will in Morocco. Nor need you be afraid to air it—you can console yourself by reflecting that it is a foreign language to the Moroccan as well!

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

BACKGROUND TO EVENTS

I

THE time has now come to abandon tourist delights and to put together the fragments which make up the Moroccan jigsaw. This must include a more detached account of recent events than has been given, for some of them are still the subject of vivid discussion.

First it would be well to quote in full the document which forms the basis of the whole question—the agreement which led to the establishment of the protectorate. It will be recalled that Morocco was in utter confusion, its tribes warring against one another and against the Sultan. To save his throne, he called in the French, who had already been active in Morocco, had established themselves in some coastal areas, and had induced the other great powers to recognize that Morocco lay within the French 'sphere of influence'.

The treaty, signed at Fez on March 30th, 1912, reads:

'The Government of the French Republic and the Government of His Sherifian Majesty, desirous of inaugurating a regular régime in Morocco based upon internal order and general security, which will make it possible to introduce reforms and to ensure the economic development of the country, have agreed upon the following:

'ARTICLE 1.—The Government of the French Republic and His Majesty the Sultan have agreed to establish in Morocco a new régime comprising the administrative, judicial, educational, economic, financial and military reforms which the French Government may see fit to introduce within the Moroccan territory.

'This régime shall safeguard the religious status, the respect and traditional prestige of the Sultan, the exercise of the

Mohammedan religion and of all religious institutions, in particular those of the Habous. It shall include the organization of a reformed Sherifian Makhzen.

'The Government of the Republic will come to an understanding with the Spanish Government regarding the interests which this Government derives from its geographical position and territorial possessions on the Moroccan coast.

'In like manner, the city of Tangier shall retain its recognized distinctive characteristics, which will determine its municipal organization.

'ARTICLE 2.—His Majesty the Sultan agrees that henceforth the French Government, subject to prior notification to the Makhzen, may proceed to such military occupation of the Moroccan territory as it may deem necessary for the maintenance of good order and the security of commercial transactions, and may exercise every police supervision on land and within the Moroccan waters.

'ARTICLE 3.—The Government of the Republic pledges itself to lend constant support to His Sherifian Majesty against all dangers which might threaten his person or throne, or endanger the tranquillity of his states. The same support shall be given the heir to the throne and his successors.

'ARTICLE 4.—Such measures as the new régime of the Protectorate may require shall be established by decree, upon the proposal of the French Government, by His Sherifian Majesty or the authorities to whom he may have delegated his power. The same procedure shall be observed in the matter of new regulations and of modifications of the existing regulations.

'ARTICLE 5.—The French Government shall be represented to His Sherifian Majesty by a Commissioner Resident-General, representative of all the powers of the Republic in Morocco, who shall attend to the execution of the present Agreement.

'The Commissioner Resident-General shall be the sole intermediary between the Sultan and foreign representatives and in the relations which these representatives maintain with the Moroccan Government. In particular, he shall have charge of all matters relating to foreigners in the Sherifian Empire. He shall have the power to approve and promulgate, on behalf

of the French Government, all the decrees issued by His Sherifian Majesty.

'ARTICLE 6.—The diplomatic and consular agents of France shall be charged with the representation and protection of Moroccan subjects and interests abroad.

'His Majesty the Sultan pledges himself not to conclude any act of an international nature without the previous approval of the French Republic.

'ARTICLE 7.—The Government of the French Republic and the Government of His Sherifian Majesty reserve unto themselves the right to determine by mutual agreement the basis of a financial reorganization which, while respecting the rights conferred upon bondholders of the Moroccan public loans, shall make it possible to guarantee the commitments of the Sherifian Treasury and to collect regularly the revenues of the Empire.

'ARTICLE 8.—His Sherifian Majesty declares that in future, he will refrain from contracting, directly or indirectly, any public or private loan, and from granting in any form whatever any concession without the authorization of the French Government.

'ARTICLE 9.—The present Treaty shall be submitted to the Government of the French Republic for ratification and the instrument of the said ratification shall be handed without delay to His Majesty the Sultan.

'In faith whereof, the undersigned have drawn up the present Act and have affixed their seals thereto.'

The question at issue is simple: have the French fulfilled the conditions of the Treaty? They have established a new régime; have effected wide reforms: have safeguarded the respect and prestige of the Sultan, and have secured order. The Moroccan Nationalists, however, claim that the French have broken the spirit of the treaty—instead of 'protecting' Morocco, they have annexed it. A protectorate implies a paternal care and direction, but only until such time as the untutored child is firmly set on new and proper paths. It is argued that the French have monopolized the administration, and have made no attempt to train Moroccans to take over the service.

(Illogically enough, the same sentence claims: 'The govern-

mental and administrative *élite* whom Marshal Lyautey found among the Moroccans have been deliberately kept out of office.' Yet it was this same '*élite*' which had brought Morocco to the appalling chaos which made French intervention not only possible but inevitable.)

Admittedly the French control the administration. The Sultan can refuse to assent to proposed legislation, but he has no power of initiative. On the executive side all power, save the administration of Koranic law and of the *habous*, the amalgamated charitable fund, lies with the French. (For many centuries it has been a practice of devout Moslems to leave a part of their wealth to the mosque: such bequests have now been centralized and are administered by the Sultan—an economic responsibility of some magnitude.)

The Moroccans form only an insignificant part of the Civil Service, and are mostly in its lower ranks. There is a special school at Rabat for training Moroccans for administrative posts: it was only founded in 1950, and trains but sixty men at a time, so results have not yet been forthcoming.

The French reply to the criticism is that Moroccans cannot be admitted to higher grades until they have attained a reasonable standard of education: and that, until quite recently, comparatively few of these have been prepared to take the trouble to acquire this: and even these preferred commerce or private practice to the public service. This argument is soundly based: much of the blame must be on the shoulders of the Moroccans themselves, but it would scarcely be reasonable to expect them to admit this.

II

At this stage it is advisable to consider recent events in greater detail. Naturally, they are used in argument more fervently than conditions of fifty years ago.

The birth of Moroccan nationalism is usually associated with the Berber *dahir* of 1930, which restored to the Berber tribes their own traditional methods of applying their common law —methods far more democratic than those in Arab regions. The justice of the *dahir* can scarcely be questioned: the French

were doubtless influenced by the conditions of the time, when they were still fighting against the Berber tribes, nominally to impose the Sultan's authority. They held, reasonably enough, that it would be impossible to do this and at the same time to deny the Berbers some of their elementary rights.

Certain of the Moroccan intellectuals saw the move from another angle. They claimed that it weakened the Sultan's authority: in one way this was quite true, though if his administration of the Koranic law had persisted the Berbers would have been in continuous revolt. The more conservative religious leaders saw in the move a direct challenge to the supremacy of the Koran. It was also argued, not unreasonably, that the *dahir* would act as a division between Arab and Berber.

Thus in 1934 a group of young Moroccan intellectuals in Paris drew up, with the help of politicians in French Left-wing parties, a 'Plan for Moroccan Reforms'. They demanded a strict application of the protectorate treaty, diminution of French power, admission of Moroccans on equal terms to all administrative posts, the formation of a Moslem National Assembly, and the use of Arabic as the official language of the country. This last suggestion, had it been applied, would have divided the country far more effectively than any *dahir* about local courts.

In 1936 and 1937 the Nationalists made far-reaching advances. They were encouraged by the establishment of the Popular Front government in France: and, paradoxically, by the promises of General Franco, anxious for Moroccan support in the Spanish Civil War. They were to find that the promises of politicians are not always reliable. When they recalled previous speeches made by their friends, they were met with airy generalisms and postponements.

A national tragedy in 1937 helped a propaganda campaign at home. The rains were scanty and the harvest failed: tens of thousands of people died of famine. Morocco is not the only country where politicians can be blamed for disaster, even for bad weather. The fact that the politicians were foreigners made the campaign easier.

The French reaction was foolish. They arrested the Nationalist leaders and sent them into exile, thus giving them the halo and prestige of martyrs. The folly was emphasized by

the fact that the Nationalist factions had already begun to quarrel between themselves.

The French Resident-General was, however, astute enough to see that reforms were overdue. The holder of the post was General Nogues: he introduced a programme providing for more schools and hospitals, and opening the Civil Service to Moroccans: at the same time he strengthened the authority of pashas and caids, thus bidding for their support. This contradiction passed without comment, and the country remained quiet. It was undisturbed by the outbreak of war in 1939, and even by the French collapse and Vichy rule. All observers are agreed that it was the Allied landings in November 1942 which stimulated a revival of Nationalist demands.

Everything was against the French. We have seen how the Moroccans react to authority—especially to the authority of a soldier. General Nogues had been a popular and successful chief. Now he made a mistake: under Vichy orders, he opposed the Allied landings. Thus, after their success, he was unceremonially deposed, and he escaped arrest only as a fugitive. Until then, the French had been unchallenged in Moroccan estimation. Now their prestige dwindled.

The Nationalists seized the moment to compose their differences temporarily, and formed themselves into a united Independence Party, Istiqlal. Its programme was moderate—independence over a transition period, by agreement with the French. Again the answer included the arrest of leaders: this time riots resulted in several towns, with consequent loss of life.

Nevertheless, the end of the war, with the improved economic position and reforms effected, promised or considered, all combined to ease the situation. The French adopted more liberal ideas: opponents were allowed to return, censorship was relaxed, the first exploratory moves towards political representation were suggested. Then the Nationalists found, or adopted, a new ally—the Sultan.

Sidi Mohammed V was not the eldest son of his father, but had been preferred by the French in 1927 on account of his supposedly docile character. He had loyally supported the French, never wavering even during the darkest days of the war. Whatever his opinions on Moroccan nationalism, he kept

them private. When in 1943 Istiqlal demanded independence under his sovereignty, he gave the leaders no encouragement: on the other hand, he declared his intention of collaborating with the French in a series of 'reforms within the framework of the French protectorate'.

Nevertheless, the Allied conference at Casablanca—especially a meeting with President Roosevelt—affected him deeply. The President spoke from an Atlantic Charter brief, denounced colonialism in the conventional American terms, and promised to do his best to assure Morocco's post-war independence. This conversation appears to have had a profound influence on the Sultan: hitherto all his foreign contacts had been under French tutelage—this was his first private talk with the head of a powerful state. Possibly the Sultan attached too much importance to the President's words—which to an experienced politician would appear almost meaningless. Istiqlal leaders told me that from that moment they were assured of the Sultan's support—which enabled them to compose their internal quarrels.

Yet caution had been the keynote of the Sultan's official policy: nor did it desert him now. He allowed events to develop in their own pattern. He was apparently affected by the events of 1944, when, in spite of Nationalist riots in Rabat and Fez, the French did not take a firm line. Maybe the Sultan misinterpreted their hesitancy—France was still at war, and internally very weak. However, not until April 1947 was his discretion interfered with: the cause was bathetic—a Senegalese soldier had a row with a Moroccan prostitute.

III

Not thus is the incident represented in Nationalist propaganda. I summarize the events from Rom Landau's biography *The Sultan of Morocco*.[1] From the Istiqlal viewpoint, this is official. The Nationalists look upon Mr. Landau as their most sincere and effective apologist in Europe: it is not his fault that they exaggerate his influence.

Legally Tangier is, of course, part of the Sultan's domains,

[1] Robert Hale, 1951.

and an official visit by the ruler was long overdue. Agreement of all the controlling powers being received, the Sultan's journey gained a warm reception. His official speech was duly submitted to the French for censorship. It included vague phrases like 'the legitimate rights of the Moroccan people' and 'striving towards new glories in the future', and conventional comments about the brotherhood of the Arab peoples; while acknowledging the usefulness of Western knowledge, it stressed the importance of the Koranic teaching. The French passed these without demur, but added a paragraph complimentary to French achievement in Morocco, and suggesting that in its further progress the country should turn to France, with her scientists and technicians, as these were 'inspired by that spirit of liberty which leads countries towards prosperity and peace'. The Sultan agreed to its inclusion.

Then, Mr. Landau adds—disclaiming that he is influenced by propaganda and counter-propaganda, and limiting himself to a few 'relevant facts': "On the eve of the Sultan's departure to Tangier the famous 'Casablanca incident' occurred: outside an army barracks an Arab woman was molested by a Senegalese soldier, and in the *fracas* that ensued the troops killed and wounded several hundred natives before the authorities brought the bloodshed to an end."

The incident thus consisted of an attack on a local woman by a Senegalese soldier: and a massacre of civilians by 'the troops'. Even more could be—and, in some circles, is—read into this account, which is substantially the Istiqlal version. It implies that the incident was used by the French as an excuse for violence, which went on unrestrained until the authorities decided to end it.

The whole affair was so intriguing that I made some enquiries into the 'incident'. Official records were available, and I found people who had actually been concerned in it—not only Europeans but Moroccans. What actually happened differs in some important details from the account quoted.

A Senegalese soldier went into the *quartier reservé* to find a prostitute. He was immediately taken in tow by one of the swarm of *souteneurs*, and led towards a suitable house. But an argument developed about the price to be paid to the woman. It culminated in blows. No doubt the soldier could have held

his own, but the pimp was joined by several of his fellows—and by a contingent of prostitutes, indignant against a man who had tried to beat down the price below Union levels.

So the Senegalese called for assistance—four of his friends had come to the 'Prostitutes' City' on the same errand. They rushed to his aid, and in the subsequent fight one of them was wounded by a knife. The Senegalese are easily roused to anger. They carried their wounded comrade back to barracks, roused their friends—and raided the armoury for weapons. (Here some officer in the barracks had been sadly negligent.)

The dispute had now ceased to be economic—it was racial. About a hundred angry Senegalese, with rifles and bayonets, charged into the *quartier* to take revenge on pimps and prostitutes alike.

Conflicts between Senegalese and prostitutes were not unknown, but this was on an unprecedented scale. Before the French could intervene effectively, seventy people had been killed—men, women *and* French police. Hundreds were injured.

This is a plain account of an unsavoury affair. It was seized upon by the propagandists. The Nationalists complained that the French did not intervene quickly enough (the complaint generally made about firemen by people who help only with words!). A suggestion has been made on the French side that the incident had been deliberately provoked—that Istiqlal wanted martyrs, especially when the Sultan was just about to set off on an important journey. Yet Istiqlal would surely not have chosen its martyrs from pimps and prostitutes.

It will be noted that Mr. Landau does not mention these. He does, however, make clear the dramatic effect of the 'incident'—or of its presentation. "The whole affair looked suspicious to Moorish eyes, and when the Sultan heard of it he was so angry that he struck out the pro-French interpolation in his speech."

Unfortunately he failed to tell anybody of his intention—and his speech had already been issued to the press! The confusion can be imagined. The French believed that they had been deceived, but the Istiqlal leaders were delighted—in such circumstances even innocuous generalisms acquired a real meaning. The incident was interpreted as announcing that the Sultan

fully supported Nationalist claims. The French were not at all pleased. The man they had chosen as a puppet proved to have opinions of his own—and this could be awkward. Yet these might not have been revealed had a Senegalese soldier paid the trade price without argument.

IV

Istiqlal may exaggerate the Sultan's devotion to their cause. But from this time onwards he made it clear that he wanted greater freedom from French control and a new status for his country granted by a new treaty with France. Istiqlal, exhilarated by the apparent adherence of so powerful an ally, pressed forward with greater impetus. The modest moves of the French towards reform were now dismissed as inadequate.

In February 1948 was inaugurated a new Council of Government. This advisory body sat in two sections, French and Moroccan: the French council had always been elected, the Moroccan nominated. Now, for the first time, part of the Moroccan delegation was elected—Chambers of Commerce and of Agricuture being used as the electing bodies. The new Council thus included eleven Istiqlal members.

Controversial issues were now freely debated—the powers of pashas and caids, the inferior position of Moroccans in the Civil Service, trades unions, social services, and the like.

The French did not handle the situation cleverly. They conceded all the debating points to Istiqlal, who used them within and without the Council. It is useless to establish any form of 'popular' chamber unless one is prepared to give it some authority. The French merely allocated to it words—without responsibility.

General Juin had been sent to Morocco as a 'strong man', but his personal popularity could not compensate for the Istiqlal criticisms of the inadequacy of French reforms. Nor did the French counter-propaganda succeed against the Istiqlal claims, sometimes well founded but often demagogically exaggerated.

Then, in October 1950, the Sultan was invited on an official visit to Paris. There he not only asked for reforms, but made

forthright demands for a new treaty to replace that of 1912. This the French government was not prepared to consider, so that negotiations failed.

The incident was vividly discussed in the French press, which took sides with great partiality. Since the Nationalist cause had been 'adopted' by some of the Left-wing parties, it was automatically opposed by those of the Right. This is one of the weaknesses of the Moroccan position, and explains the contradictory spasms of liberal and authoritative measures. In the arguments, too, the French *colons* revealed that their 'pressure group' in Paris was well organized.

The Sultan received an enthusiastic greeting on his return, and Istiqlal was encouraged to new efforts. At the next meeting of the Council of Government two of its members presented reports so critical of the régime that General Juin ordered them from the chamber. The other nine Istiqlal delegates followed them voluntarily. On the other hand, El Glaoui of Marrakesh made an impassioned protest to the Sultan against his support of the Istiqlal party. Obviously events were moving towards a climax.

On January 26th, 1951, General Juin had an interview with the Sultan and formally asked him to disavow Istiqlal. According to some reports, he threatened to depose him if he did not. Three weeks later General Juin returned to the charge. The Sultan appealed to President Auriol, who naturally advised him to do as the Resident-General had requested.

The negotiations could not be kept secret, but all the demonstrations were not Nationalist. Armed Berber tribesmen swarmed into Rabat, apparently threatening the Sultan's palace. Others appeared outside Fez, and made a formal parade to demonstrate their strength and anti-Istiqlal feelings.

The French claimed at the time that the demonstrations were 'spontaneous', and took steps to protect the Sultan against his headstrong subjects! The Nationalists declared that they were deliberately organized by the French, and saw the hand of the Glaoui in them. The one thing certain is that the demonstrations could not have taken place without French permission. I heard a dozen accounts of the incident: the most plausible came from a French official: "When a number of pashas and caids heard that the Sultan refused to disentangle himself from

the Istiqlal, they said, 'We ought to do something about this.' So we replied, 'Well, why don't you do it?' And they did."

The events are still bitterly discussed in Morocco. Istiqlal leaders assured me that the Berber tribesmen really thought that they were marching to the Sultan's defence. Such of the demonstrators as I was able to trace contradicted this: they had been told by their pashas or caids that the Sultan was making common cause with Istiqlal and the Communists: this was quite enough to rouse them to anger. Moreover, as I have pointed out, it is always easy to rouse the Moroccan countrymen to action against the towns.

The demonstrations provoked one incident which has proved damaging to Istiqlal propaganda. The Egyptian press, never noted for accuracy or restraint, published a vivid story that Fez had been bombarded by French troops! This was completely untrue. Anti-Nationalists promptly claimed that the 'news' had been given by Allal el Fassi, leader of Istiqlal. This also was untrue, but unfortunately for him the Egyptian press had been his most consistent supporter, so that the rumour found some credence. (Thus, when in May 1952 Allal el Fassi declaimed against recent 'massacres' in Morocco, his opponents effectively quoted the 'bombardment of Fez' against him.)

The account given to me by an Istiqlal spokesman was to the effect that at the time of the disturbances, while being entertained to dinner at Tangier, a young English journalist got drunk. Towards the end of the evening a local editor whispered the startling news that a new war had begun—Fez had been bombarded. The young journalist retained enough professional enthusiasm and control of his legs to stagger to a telephone, and to give the news to his paper.

This story had too many discrepancies, especially as the name of the paper was unknown. I assured my friend that no responsible newspaper would publish such a story on the unconfirmed report even of a sober junior in Tangier! Further, the *fact* was that the report emanated not from the British but from the Egyptian press.

Among the French, there were not lacking those who believed that the 'bombardment of Fez' story was deliberately engineered. Some of the Middle Eastern states had been expect-

ing that the French would depose the Sultan, thus giving them —and Istiqlal—an excuse for action. If so, they were disappointed, for in the confusion, the Sultan capitulated. He dismissed the members of his Imperial Cabinet, and issued a declaration in which he condemned Communism, paid tribute to the French, recommended a policy of 'gentleness' towards them, and censured the methods of 'certain parties' which caused obstruction to progress and divided the people of Morocco. This was as far as he would go in a denunciation of Istiqlal—he claimed that as Sultan he was above all parties, and hence could not name any one of them: the Communists were apparently the only exception.

A few weeks later, however, he gave to an Egyptian newspaper an interview which considerably modified the French 'victory'. He declared that he had signed the declaration because of French threats and the fear of internal strife. (He supported the idea that the tribesmen had been misled—they were 'ignorant of the true object of their *deplacement*'.) Because of these considerations, he 'felt forced to sign'.

Immediately he resumed his place as the nominal patron of Istiqlal. A signature extracted by force has no moral value—and the use of force could be exploited for propaganda purposes. Obviously the crisis had not been resolved, but only postponed.

V

Months passed. Istiqlal seemed bent on a policy of non-co-operation. It achieved only limited results. In new elections for the Council of Government in December 1951, for example, it ordered a complete boycott. Despite an intense effort in Fez, the strongest centre of Istiqlal, 41 per cent of the electors voted. In Casablanca, forceful attempts at interference led to riots in which five people were killed.

But March 30th, 1952, was the fortieth anniversary of the Treaty of Fez, which established the protectorate. The Istiqlal leaders were astute enough to realize that it was time to show their strength—the French consistently represented their movement as that of a small group of starry-eyed idealists. So they

proclaimed March 30th as a national day of mourning: in particular, all shops were to close.

Again, I heard many conflicting accounts of the success or otherwise of this operation. From one Istiqlal source I learned that they included a token 'general strike' for the day. Other Istiqlal leaders denied this—they had not called out the industrial workers because these could not afford to lose their wages —or, according to the French, because the workers would not have struck.

The actual edict was proclaimed to all Moroccan shopkeepers —'close for the day'. There was agreement that the order had been generally obeyed—the arguments began again as to how it had been carried out. Istiqlal leaders declared that with few exceptions shopkeepers spontaneously observed the melancholy occasion. The French denied this, pointing to the riots and arrests following the use of force by gangs which invaded the *souks* and compelled traders to close.

I do not pretend that my own enquiries were conclusive. In all I asked the same question of sixty or seventy shopkeepers in different towns. Some preferred not to answer: others agreed that they had closed. But the replies of others indicated the intrusion of an unhealthy theme.

"We are not interested in politics—we are merchants," said one little group in a provincial town. "But we had our orders —not from Istiqlal, but from the wholesalers in Fez who supply us. They support Istiqlal, we know. We had a clear warning that, if we did not close, further supplies of goods might not be forthcoming."

"My experience was slightly different," said another. "A number of local Istiqlal came to see me, pointing out politely but firmly that if I did not close none of their members would ever buy from me again. As they included some good customers, I closed."

"I did not intend to close," said a shopkeeper at Fez. "But a gang of youths came up and told me that they would break up my shop unless I did." I heard this complaint a dozen times. In one or two instances violence had actually been used.

"They came to me a few days before, and told me I must close. I said no. Next morning my door was all covered with

filth. And the next. So I closed. I have to make my living by trade."

When I mentioned these cases to Istiqlal friends, some were indignant, some incredulous, and some concerned. They were nearly all men of pacific tendencies, and appreciated that their movement could become completely distorted were it based on the creation of fear. Yet the existence of this cannot be denied —I can make no estimate of its extent. Apart from the frank admissions of this, there was always the possibility that it was also present in the minds of those who preferred not to answer. True, they may have shown the natural Moroccan reticence —though generally people talked freely enough—but they might well have distrusted the consequences of too free a tongue.

There were also available for inspection the official records of legal cases arising on the same day. The two most serious incidents occurred at Mrirt, near Khenifra, and Safi. I deliberately included both places in my itinerary, and compared local and official accounts.

At the little town of Mrirt some of the shopkeepers had refused to close. Local militant Nationalists used force, the police were called in, and arrests were made. Then the affair almost ceased to be political and became tribal. I have referred to the independence and solidarity of the Berber tribes. With some of their men in the hands of the police, it was easy to arouse the fraternal spirit of the rest. They attempted a rescue: stone-throwing began, then worse. After such provocation, the order was given to the police to fire, and nine people were killed.

At Safi the incident ran along similar lines, but on the following day. Here four demonstrators were killed.

Naturally, the dead men became martyrs for the cause—there were not wanting those who proclaimed that Istiqlal *needed* martyrs. It is an old argument: if people are killed in a riot, who are to blame—the police, or the politicians who knowingly or unwittingly instigated the riot?

Altogether over four hundred people were arrested during the demonstration—some for violence, some for inciting to violence: most of these received prison sentences. Others were arrested because they were part of a mob, on the technical

charge of refusing to move on when requested by the police. Most of these were released after investigation.

The French claim that the cases of violence *were* provoked: certainly they occurred, and repressive action had to be taken. It was argued that there were few if any repercussions: undoubtedly the places concerned were now quiet enough, with people ready to discuss the events of the day. The French further claim that the firm police action had prevented further demonstrations. While I was in Morocco two significant dates passed: May 1st, Labour Day—an admirable occasion for marking Istiqlal strength among the workers, but one which passed off as a pleasant general holiday, much enjoyed by the French officials—and May 16th, anniversary of the famous Berber *dahir* which the Nationalists detest more fiercely than any other French action.

VI

"To the present day Moroccan prisons are full of natives who have never been told what their crime is, have never appeared before a judge, and who yet serve long sentences, including solitary confinement and hard labour . . . the Moroccan gaols are packed with political prisoners," declares the Nationalist pamphlet.

If the first complaint were true, it would be a damning indictment of French rule: in a colonial territory there can be little pretence of democracy, but there should be justice. If it *is* true, then Moroccan as well as French lawyers have seriously failed in their duty, for the law itself is quite clear. I turned up the *dahir*, or decree, which covers the point. (August 4th, 1918.) Summarized, it provides that an accused person must be brought before a court within twenty-four hours of arrest (in country districts it was agreed that this could be extended to forty-eight hours, because of difficult or lengthy communications) and must be allowed to speak. The pasha or caid can then remand him pending investigation—on bail or in custody, according to the gravity of the offence: if in custody, for not longer than fifteen days before a second appearance in open court.

(There is, however, another regulation which gives local authorities the power to *exile* men whose activities are considered dangerous to public order. Such men are ordered to live in some distant place. They are not imprisoned, and may earn their own living—the sole condition is that they do not return to their homes. No trial is necessary for the sentence of exile: it has been applied in about 160 cases. There is no pretence that it is judicial democracy; it is an emergency method of preventing possible bloodshed in riots.)

All trials must be in public, save in cases involving official secrets—and even then the judgment must be public: courts sit at least four times a week if necessary; all parties and witnesses must appear before them. If a man is condemned, any period of imprisonment pending trial is deducted from the sentence.

These are fairly ordinary Western conditions. I tried in vain to get any details of *actual* cases of political prisoners. There were vague charges that some the pashas had private prisons of their own, to which they consigned people who would not give them generous enough bribes, but even if these private gaols existed—which the French emphatically deny—they are obviously not those indicated by the denunciation. If a man ever *were* imprisoned without trial, his relatives would have only to appeal to the French authorities. I passed on to its second point—that the Moroccan gaols are packed with political prisoners.

Immediately the argument arises: 'What is a political prisoner?' The answer would be very different in England and in Russia. If a demonstrator slings a brick through a window and is given a month in gaol, is *he* a political prisoner? If so, I fear that in England he might share the same fate.

In Fez the local Istiqlal leaders told me with indignation of the experience of a Karaouine professor who had preached a patriotic sermon in a mosque. He was arrested, and sentenced to a year's imprisonment—there were no witnesses, and no lawyers were allowed: there was only a hearsay charge.

Unless the French had deliberately falsified their records to deceive me, and the principals were all lying, the facts of the case were somewhat different. The time was just after General Juin's ultimatum to the Sultan in February 1951. The preacher

for the day was a Moroccan who had congratulated the general on his action—for Moroccan opinion is *not* unanimous. As he mounted the pulpit, a Karaouine professor shouted: "Don't listen to this traitor! Go out!" Immediately Istiqlal members passed around among the congregation, with the repeated call, "Go out!" In a minute or two the mosque was empty—another indication of the element of fear which pervades Moroccan politics.

Now it is against the law to talk politics in a mosque. There might be some comment if a bishop preached on Social Credit or Trotskyism in Westminster Abbey, for politics in pulpits are not favoured. In Morocco the prohibition is not merely a custom—it is the law. So the professor who had led the obviously organized demonstration was arrested and tried. Witnesses *were* called, and their testimony is available in full. True, the professor was not defended by local lawyers—they were summoned, but did not appear. However, he appealed, and the case was re-tried before the Moroccan court at Rabat. Here he was defended by Moroccan lawyers, but his sentence was again imposed—and was confirmed by the Sultan!

Having some experience of such things, I had determined to follow up every case within my reach. The point which impressed me was that my Istiqlal friends, sincere men, really *believed* the version of the case they put to me, and were indignant because the professor had been wantonly condemned to 'political imprisonment'. Whether their own friends had deceived them, or whether they had deceived themselves, I could not decide: but obviously the mental state was potentially dangerous.

At Casablanca Istiqlal did not claim that the gaols were full of political prisoners, but gave the number as over 2,000. At Fez the figure was reduced to 500.

"Where are they?" I asked.

"All over the country."

"Here in Fez?"

"Yes—lots of them."

"Very well. I will go to the prison tomorrow morning."

This reply appeared to be unexpected. "You will not be allowed," they said.

But I was allowed, without difficulty—merely a telephone

call to Rabat. I have visited prisons in many lands, but never with pleasure. The one at Fez was a smaller edition of that which I had previously seen at Casablanca. So far from being 'packed with political prisoners' it was very far from full. In the European section were two men—one of whom was actually an Algerian who ranked as a French national: in the women's quarter were 46 prostitutes and eight petty offenders: in the Moroccan men's quarters were 230 offenders, including about 30 youths.

The number was very small for a city the size of Fez. Actually, the Moroccan is not a natural criminal: serious crime inside the *medina* is a matter for real concern. I went round each group in turn, alone save for my interpreter. All the men were imprisoned for well-defined offences, generally for theft. Not one even claimed to be a political prisoner. Nor did they complain of their conditions. Cells were large, accommodating twenty-five men: there was a lavatory in a corner. Meals consisted of a bowl of thick soup and a loaf of bread twice a day, with meat once a week. Visitors were allowed once a week, and could bring in food—but, although I myself would soon tire of the prison diet, it was as good as most of the prisoners would know at home. If able-bodied and well, they were put to work—in the gardens or kitchens, or building houses for the warders.

"We *did* have a political prisoner here last week," said the governor, apparently sensing my disappointment. "If you cared to call him that. Actually he served fifteen days for throwing stones through windows."

Again, my Istiqlal friends seemed genuinely surprised when I reported the failure of my quest—though they could readily have reached the same conclusion on a visitors' day.

"They must have been transferred to a convict prison," they said.

As the sentences were generally short, I doubted this, but promised to investigate—I was going on to Port Lyautey and Rabat. But I continued to ask for a list of names. I persisted in this request at all our meetings. On my last evening in Fez I was duly presented with the list: it contained not 500 names, but 4.

I traced them a few days later in the prison at Rabat—again

there was no difficulty of access. I learned that they had been found guilty of intimidating shopkeepers by violence on March 30th, and that the pasha considered sharp sentences were necessary in the interests of law and order. Thus two men received sentences of 18 months' imprisonment, and two youths sentences of two years.

Substantially, they admitted the offences on which they were charged—only one attempted to justify his action on political grounds. When I examined the evidence, I had to admit that the two men would have received at least as severe a sentence in England.

Nevertheless, I was a little concerned about the two youths, schoolboys of 13 and 14. The evidence showed that they had behaved like young thugs, and in England they would have been immediate candidates for Borstal. Yet I wondered if boys of 13 and 14 were primarily responsible for violence impelled by politics.

A little later I advanced this argument to a French Minister. I pointed out also that these lads would make very good martyrs for the Nationalist propaganda—which would naturally ignore the violence. I went far beyond my recognized rights as a visitor: it is customary in Morocco, as it used to be in Palestine, to release prisoners on the occasion of a religious feast. The two boys, I suggested, might be considered for this privilege. The suggestion was favourably received.

Justice can be blind. Even when its forms and decencies are preserved, it does not always follow that the actual culprits are brought to trial.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

PROPAGANDA JADE

I

I HAVE explained my opinion that the Istiqlal propaganda was bad and unwise. Even a single statement, when checked and found untrue, impels disbelief in others from the same source. Because of its exaggeration, the Nationalist case has done itself much harm, for experienced foreign observers do not accept its devastating generalisms without enquiry. For my own part, I was even more concerned with the effects of their own propaganda on the Istiqlal leaders themselves.

In Fez I referred them to statements issued in their name—that 'France holds Morocco in abject economic serfdom', so that any material advances are for the benefit not of the Moroccans but of the French.

"But that is true," I was at once assured.

"Yet the irrigation schemes——"

"For the French *colons*, not for us."

"But the first irrigation I saw was at Tinerhir—where there is not a single French *colon—all* the farmers benefiting were Moroccans."

"Ah, but you should have gone to Beni Amir," they countered.

"I did. I found there about half a dozen *colons*, long established, to hundreds of Moroccans. There were French agriculturists employed on the scheme, of course—it could scarcely operate without them. But the independent French farmers were an insignificant minority."

"But what about the rest of the plain—Beni Moussa—which will soon be irrigated from the barrage at Bin el Ouidane? French *colons* have been falling over each other buying up the land."

"That's strange," I replied. "Naturally, that was my first question there—the temptation to speculation was too obvious.

I was assured that the land was under firm control. No man was allowed to sell save to a man of his own tribe. If any circumstances arose which made this impracticable, the land was bought by the state for experimental purposes."

"That is the French story—they did not tell you the truth."

"I have eyes as well as ears. If the plain is swarming with French *colons*, they must have hidden or disguised themselves very well. And, incidentally, your own people on the spot at Beni Mellal did not share your complaint."

It is almost useless to argue with fanatics, so I put through a telephone call to the French officer in charge of the irrigation scheme at Beni Mellal. (Incidentally, long-distance telephoning in Morocco is easier than in England!) His reply was emphatic.

"I issue a challenge! Bring them here, and I defy them to find *one* French *colon* who has bought ground in the new area. If they find one—well, what gage shall I offer? A money bet? Or shall I resign?"

He did not have to do either, for his challenge was not taken up. Instead I got a disturbing reply. "Ah, but just wait for six months and see what happens then!"

Distortions are no novelty when enthusiasm over-reaches itself, and ideas have no fixed limitations, but a state of mind which refuses to accept facts which can be palpably demonstrated is dangerous. I was very uneasy as I returned alone to Beni Mellal, to confirm the Frenchman's statement. Nor was there the slightest sign that the situation would differ in six months: the prospect exists only in the minds of people who want to believe it, but suspicion is the least yielding and the most misleading of all mental aberrations.

II

The Istiqlal propaganda is ill-advised because it is so largely founded on anti-French abuse. I met no Frenchman who pretended that his country's record in Morocco was perfect, but I met many who pointed with pride at her material achievements. The time has not been overlong. Though the protectorate was imposed in 1912, some regions were not 'pacified' until 1934.

In fairness, the periods of the two world wars should be deducted when estimating progress.

A brief synopsis will illustrate the French point. The full comparison is seldom possible: in 1912 there were no Moroccan records of any description. Thus many figures quoted begin years later, when advances had already been made.

"Most of them (the Moroccans) are now little, if any, better off than before 1912, and in some cases they are actually worse off," says the Nationalist pamphlet, arguing that though the overall wealth has risen considerably, the new prosperity has benefited largely the French, not the Moors.

One striking contradiction is immediately obvious. In 1921 the population was under 4 million: to-day it exceeds 9 million. Of these approximately 400,000 are Europeans (90 per cent French) and 250,000 native Jews. Seventy-five per cent of the entire population is rural.

Part of the increase is due to the medical services which I have already described—especially to those which have banished or controlled the epidemics which once ravaged the country, and those which have reduced the cruel rate of infant mortality. Second only in importance to these are the ordinary public facilities which prior to 1912 scarcely existed. More than once Moroccans told me that water in the cities was the greatest practical boon the French had given them. In 1926 the daily consumption of water in the principal towns averaged 27,000 cubic metres: it now exceeds 140,000 cubic metres.

It is difficult to measure standards of living in a country which has no vital statistics. Some of the Istiqlal arguments recoil on themselves—as, for instance, the statement that whereas before 1912 Morocco used to export wheat, now it has to import. This is true—but, considering the doubling of the population, scarcely remarkable!

Admittedly, the production of cereals has not increased proportionately with the population (12 million quintals to 22 million quintals). Further, habits have changed. As a consequence of progress, people now demand as a necessity of life what was formerly a luxury. In 1920 the annual consumption of sugar was 13 kilogrammes per head: by 1950 it was 32. The consumption of tea has increased from 800 grammes to 1,900 grammes. In 1920 the sales of textiles averaged 10 metres per person: now

it is 26 metres. The increase in the weight of cattle slaughtered for home consumption has been 280 per cent for oxen, 310 per cent for sheep, and 670 per cent for goats. In the towns, where detailed observation is more practicable, the daily caloric-intake has increased from 2,211 in 1939 to 2,560 in 1949—and has risen far more since then.

"It is of course intensely difficult to relate people's wants to figures," said a responsible French official. "In my time, I am quite certain, the standard of living has risen consistently. Proportionately, the Moroccans have benefited more than the French—true, the French started off from a much higher standard. The peasant budget is a puzzle to any economist, but we can base some estimates on salaries and wages. Since 1939, such payments to Europeans have increased by 579 per cent: to Moroccans by 1,110 per cent. I am not claiming that either increase is adequate to the risen cost of living.

"Further, it may indeed be that in some ways there are Moroccans who *are* worse off. This is due to new standards in other directions. For example, any observer would agree that the women here are very much better dressed than they were thirty years ago. If their husbands have merely kept pace with the rising prices, this could mean that a bigger proportion of their incomes goes on clothes, and less on nutrition.

"The peasants certainly have advanced on average—all those whose farms have benefited by irrigation, or modernization. There are still hundreds of thousands who cling almost religiously to ancient methods of agriculture, but even these have gained because of the higher comparative prices of farm products. No one can say how long these will prevail, however, so maybe we ought to allow that there are *some* people who are no better off. But they are no worse off. And this is merely from the economic angle—from most other aspects they have advanced, or at least have had the opportunity to advance."

The area under cultivation will increase year by year as the new schemes mature, but the gap between yields and population will have to be met, to some extent, by the expansion of Moroccan industry. I have suggested that mining will make a rapid advance: only the fringe of the country's resources have yet been exploited. In general industry the progress has been more remarkable. The towns have ample electric power, while

coal and oil supply local power stations—in 1912 only man and animal power were available, apart from primitive water mills. At that time 'industry' was represented by artisans, making by hand the traditional craft-productions of Morocco. Today, in addition to the artisans, there are more than 130,000 people employed in factories, 110,000 of them Moroccans.

The general aim is (*a*) to manufacture at home an increasing range of products hitherto bought abroad, (*b*) to use natural resources for manufactures intended for export. With more Moroccans employed, and thus withdrawn from such rural districts as are over-populated, the tendency to raise the standard of life should persist.

I do not care to trust to figures alone. I put this point to a large number of men of a wide range of society in town and country. The general opinion was emphatic: there were some grumbles—mostly local or individual—but almost universal agreement that on average people were indeed better off. Naturally, for this query I chose men of mature age, who could remember what conditions used to be.

It is strange. I was bombarded by economic arguments from Nationalists, most of which were exaggerated or unfounded, yet legitimate grievances were often overlooked. For example, Moroccan economy is 'tied' to that of France. If the price of wheat rises in France, so also it does in Morocco. This may please the farmers who have wheat for sale, but it does *not* please the man who has to buy it. In effect, he is buying his food at French prices, but on only one-half to two-thirds of French wages. Were I a Moroccan, I should object to this very strongly.

III

I talked for an hour with the French equivalent of the Moroccan Home Secretary. He discussed his work calmly and precisely, never claiming perfection or anything like it. But when I read an extract from the Nationalist pamphlet he almost exploded. It argued that if Nationalism were only a minority movement, as the French claimed, why were 14,000 policemen needed to suppress it?

He seized the telephone and gave some orders: a clerk entered with ledgers.

"Now, see for yourself," he said, with emphasis. "Here is my staff list. It includes every policeman in Morocco, warders in prison—even typists in my office—everyone on my payroll. Count the names—you will find that they total 5,300. And 35 per cent of them are Moroccans.

"Is this a large force for a population of nine millions? And it is there as a police force—its duty is to combat crime—it is only interested in politicians when they break the law. Why, look at Casablanca. With a population of 700,000, it is larger than Marseilles. Yet Marseilles has 3,000 police, and Casablanca only 1,200. A police state indeed!"[1]

The head of another department was more restrained but just as effective. I had presented him with another Nationalist complaint—that the Moroccans are much more heavily taxed than the French. He simply passed over to me a budget statement, and sat waiting while I digested it.

The 850,000 Moroccan peasants pay 89·7 per cent of the *tertib*, the 6,500 French *colons* the rest. (We have seen that they get a rebate for mechanization, if applied, but still pay far more per head than the Moroccans because their farms are so much larger.) 98·6 per cent of income tax is paid by Europeans—the only people to pay it are those on salaries, mostly civil servants, who can scarcely avoid it. Obviously it would be quite impracticable to impose a universal income tax, though it is one of the fairest of all impositions. It is found difficult enough to collect such a tax in France: in Morocco it would be impossible.

In a town, both landlord and tenant pay a special tax equivalent to the *tertib*, and 54 per cent of the receipts come from Europeans. There is a commercial tax, a form of licence based on profits—a substitute for income tax—and 69·4 per cent of this is paid by Europeans.

"No, it does not mean that the Europeans earn 69·4 per cent of the commercial income," said a tax official later. "It means

[1] Although the effective police force is only about 5,000, there are in addition rural and tribal guards, whole or part time, recruited and paid locally, and not under French direction. Even if the pamphlet claim of 14,000 police *were* correct, the number would not be large for a population of nine millions. Paris alone has 23,000 police.

that the Moroccans are much better placed to avoid the tax. They don't have awkward people like auditors."

Receipts of direct taxes can be calculated precisely: indirect taxes can only be estimated—who is to know whether a packet of cigarettes is bought by a Moroccan or a European? It is estimated that Moroccans pay 65·6 per cent of the receipts from taxes on tobacco, 98 per cent on sugar, and 10 per cent on alcohol.

Since accurate discriminations in these and smaller items is impossible, the result is only an estimate. This, however, suggests that the 400,000 Europeans pay just about as much in taxation as do the 8,500,000 Moroccans. Even if the proportion cannot be guaranteed to within 5 per cent one way or another, enough is obvious to confute the Nationalist complaint.

(There are other important budget receipts from export taxes on minerals, especially phosphates, from postal charges, from profits on the *domaines*, or state lands, and from other less important sources.)

I raised some points on my own account. By the original treaties, Morocco is supposed to preserve an 'open door' for trade to all nations. Yet it was quite obvious that France was in a very favoured position.

"Yes, in one way that is true. It is all a question of currency. Moroccan economy is linked with that of France, and there is a great shortage of foreign currency, especially of dollars. We have to have currency controls, as you have in England, with quotas and the like. Admittedly, therefore, part of your trade is frozen out—as you freeze out unnecessary imports which use up currency.

"Thus at present about 45 per cent of Moroccan exports go to France, to a value of 73 billion francs: and 65 per cent of her imports come from France, worth 140 billion francs."

"And how is the adverse balance met?"

"By France. Every year there is a deficit, which we pay."

"Do the Moroccans know that?"

"I doubt it. Some of them do not wish to know. But they should."

CHAPTER TWENTY

ISTIQLAL AND OTHERS

I

Apart from local members in all parts of Morocco, I met Istiqlal leaders in Casablanca, Fez and Rabat. They almost verified the French jibe that Istiqlal was a *bourgeois* organization, for they comprised doctors, lawyers, chemists, teachers and business men. Without exception they were sincere, most of them had great personal charm, and, but for the anti-French bias which has become their fixation, they were very intelligent.

However, it is important for them and the outside world to realize that if revolution comes to Morocco these are not the leaders who will emerge. They may prepare the way by emotional appeals, but most of them are men of pacific instincts: at the moment of action they would be swept aside by men of more brutal passions and mob-appeal, and if revolution followed its usual courses the present Istiqlal leaders would be among its first victims.

It is very difficult to estimate the real strength of Istiqlal. Every French official I consulted had a different opinion—usually tending to be an under-estimate. Istiqlal claims about 70,000 members with party cards, but its influence goes far beyond these.

Whatever it is now, it began as an intellectual *bourgeois* movement, and its financial support comes mainly from the commercial classes. It claims that it now has a large following among industrial workers. Certainly to date it is primarily a party of the towns.

Not that it neglects the country regions. Indeed, in one little town I came across propaganda as clever in its method as its general content was poor. The peasants came in to the weekly *souk*: their business over, they squatted around the professional story-teller—and, instead of Lillah and the Unfinished Shoes,

they heard a lengthy yarn about a Moroccan soldier who was wounded in the French cause and had been cheated of his pension.

The Istiqlal leaders, when I asked about their strength, replied: "Except for the French stooges, everybody in Morocco is with us." But this is not true.

In the rural areas I met people who had never heard of Istiqlal, or did not know what it was. Even allowing for Moroccan reticence, I sensed that a very large number of people—maybe a large majority—are indifferent.

Of the peasants this could be expected. Their interests and loyalties are very local: and, since Istiqlal was primarily a town creation, its appeal to them is very limited. Few of the leaders I met appreciated the town-country gap, which is by no means peculiar to Morocco. In some regions the situation is as elementary as this: an Istiqlal agent might harangue a village and apparently convince his audience: but if, a few days later, a tribal leader announced: "There's trouble in the city—with prospects of loot! Let's go!" then the tribesmen would follow him.

If Istiqlal had produced a leader with a personality of Berber appeal, the situation might have been different. But the emotional intellectualism of the townsman Allal el Fassi is scarcely calculated to appeal strongly to Berber peasants whose loyalty to their tribe is stronger than their devotion to Morocco, still a nebulous conception to most of them.

Yet indifference is a dangerous state. The man who says, "What does it matter to me who rules?" has made the first move towards totalitarianism. Moroccan history provides few examples of men standing firm for a principle, but many of people accepting an accomplished fact without protest. Some argue that such things are compatible with the Moslem religion: if a man or party or country achieves power, then it must be the will of Allah. History appears to point to the advisability of being on the winning side: in Morocco it seldom paid to lose. The element of apprehension again pervades the scene. After a number of conversations it was clear that many people who themselves held no strong political convictions were *afraid*. They had no serious complaint against the French—but was France becoming weak as a result of the war? If so—well,

suppose Istiqlal became the rulers of Morocco! Better not offend them, maybe—sit on the fence and see how things go. Millions of Germans did this in the early nineteen-thirties—they did not choose on a basis of right or wrong, or even on that of their own benefit, but on the simple issue of who was likely to achieve power—and when this was decided 90 per cent of them dutifully voted Nazi.

In the circumstances of the time and place, it seemed to me that Istiqlal's chief lack was a leader who could first rouse and then control the mob. A Kemal Ataturk could do the job—but his secular outlook would not appeal to the bulk of the Moroccan Moslems: further, however beneficently he may have begun, eventually he ended as a dictator.

II

Most opponents of Istiqlal make free use of the accusation that it is a Communist organization. This is grotesquely false, but the world is divided between people who ignore the Russian menace and those who see it everywhere.

Of the dozens of Istiqlal leaders and members I met, not one could by any stretch of imagination be called Communist. Most were orthodox Moslems, and to them belief in a materialistic creed was impossible. They disclaimed, sincerely, any connection or interest in Communist ideas—which, ultimately, are exactly the opposite of their own. As a predominently *bourgeois* party they have in the past been the recipients of the most severe Communist criticism. Until 1946 they were consistently represented as the second-villains of the Moroccan scene, merely endeavouring to secure the French power to themselves so as better to exploit the toiling workers.

The accusation must be turned the other way round. It is *not* true that Istiqlal has Communist connections: it *is* true that the Communists have 'adopted' Istiqlal, even against its will.

The Communist Party of Morocco is simply a branch of the French organization. I called in at several of its offices in the main towns. Much of its programme was formal enough, but it was vociferous in its support of Istiqlal claims—especially

in its denunciation of French imperialism and 'Fascist beastliness'.

This involuntary association could prove unfortunate for Istiqlal—particularly as only a minority of the leaders perceive its dangers, and occasionally issue anti-Communist warnings. In its anxiety for action, Istiqlal lays itself open to the charge of collaboration with the Communists. The latter, as usual, are very active among the trades unions. To date only about 30,000 Moroccans have joined local branches of French unions, many of which are Communist-controlled. For example, if the Communists engineer trouble in a factory on some ordinary economic issue, there are Istiqlal leaders who cannot withstand the temptation of representing the incident as a patriotic stand against French economic domination.

(Istiqlal, naturally, is anxious to increase its influence in the trades unions, and continues to demand local organizations rather than local branches of French unions. In refusing this, the French are doubtless influenced by events in Tunisia. When a local union was allowed to form there in 1946 it completely falsified local Communist claims by drawing off nearly all the Tunisian workers from the Communist-controlled unions—and the new organization became one of the bulwarks of the Nationalist movement. Almost certainly this could happen in Morocco. There the workers generally have joined the Communist unions, where they have joined any at all, believing that they were the most powerful and would best present their grievances. Those who are articulate Istiqlal members indignantly deny that joining a Communist-controlled union makes them Communists; this is quite true, but the connection is unscrupulously exploited both by opponents of Istiqlal and by the Communists.)[1]

I talked with an Istiqlal leader in Casablanca, a very shrewd and capable Moroccan lawyer. Though disclaiming the use of

[1] In December Allal el Fassi gave an interview to the Tangier representative of the Communist newspaper *Nouvelles Marocaines*, in which he is alleged to have declared his hostility to the inclusion of Morocco in the Atlantic Pact. He claimed later, however, that his words had been distorted; that he was not opposed to the Atlantic Pact in principle, but only to the 'arbitrary' inclusion of Morocco without 'negotiation with the Moroccan state'. Maybe he realized afterwards that it was a tactical error to give an interview to a Communist newspaper at all, for two months later he made a forthright statement that 'it is thanks to us and to Islamic principles, which are our guide, that Communism has not taken root in Morocco'.

force, he hoped that France's friends would compel her to render justice to Morocco.[1]

"But suppose Britain and America make no move?" I asked.

"A drowning man cannot choose. He must accept aid from whence it comes."

"You mean that if no aid comes from elsewhere, you would accept it from Russia?"

"We do not want that—we have nothing in common with Communism."

"But, in the last resort, you *would* accept help from Russia?"

"To free Morocco, yes, from anywhere."

The Kremlin will be delighted to hear this. The idea synchroniżes with all their revealed plans. It is only fair to say that other Istiqlal leaders repudiated the Casablanca lawyer's opinion, but I found that he was not alone in holding it. Often coupled with it was a pathetic belief that the Russians, having forced France out of Morocco, would then leave the country to work out its own destiny.

I found it difficult to persuade my friends that Morocco was not an isolated geographical unit, but part of the world: a highly important strategic area—a point unlikely to be overlooked in Moscow. The very fact that the Communists were supporting a *bourgeois* Nationalist party should in itself have aroused suspicion: it is what they have done elsewhere: of course, having made the local faction their catspaw in achieving power, they have promptly liquidated it and its leaders.

Almost as pathetic was the fairly widespread confidence in the strength and influence of Egypt. The rosy-hued picture painted was of an Egypt I had never been able to discover—a democratic country, with high standards of living and happiness. When someone expressed the wish that Morocco would 'be like Egypt', I could only reply that I could never wish a friendly country such ill.

[1] Generally, among Moroccan politicians, I found a pathetic belief that the 'conscience of the world' was much more active than in fact it is. They pinned great hopes on the promise of some Moslem states to raise the case of Morocco in the United Nations in the autumn of 1952, and usually overlooked two important considerations—that an attack on France gave her the right to reply, and that the internal political achievements of some of the Moslem states were not in themselves likely to impress other more advanced nations. Further, a repulse of the attack might encourage French reaction at the expense of progress.

The appalling poverty in Egypt, the oligarchical rule of a group of pashas, the low standards of health, the shameless exploitation of the peasants—all these things were either not known or not understood. Nor was Egypt's pressing internal danger, inherent from her economic chaos and the tremendous gap between her rich and poor. It was argued that 'the Egyptian problem' evolved from the presence of British troops in the Canal zone: conditions inside Egypt were ignored or completely misunderstood.[1]

One incident did seem to have some effect. I mentioned that Egypt and Russia did not resume diplomatic relations until the last war made them technical allies. The Egyptian minister in Moscow finds that a staff of eleven is adequate for his duties —but his opposite number in Cairo has a staff of more than two hundred! Not surprisingly, Egyptians wondered what they were all doing. The January riots gave part of the answer. Not that these disturbances were Russian-inspired: they were entirely a Nationalist responsibility. But, on this occasion, behind the organized demonstration of students and the enthusiastic mob of gangsters and looters was a third force—of those who thought that the moment of revolution was at hand.

My Istiqlal friends received this comment in silence, not unmixed with alarm. I suggested that they should check my information with their Egyptian friends. Evidently they did,

[1] Some weeks after this was written I received a pathetic letter from an Istiqlal friend, apparently completely disillusioned by the course of events in Egypt. His idol had been revealed as having feet of slime. The Egyptian press, so highly esteemed because it had supported the Istiqlal cause, was now revealed as venal beyond precedent—after treating Farouk as a near-divinity for years it suddenly changed to rabid abuse. Events had shown quite clearly the rottenness of the Egyptian fabric, with open admissions of wholesale corruption in high quarters and appalling poverty in low ones. It was made abundantly clear that such things are open invitations to dictatorship, either of the Right or Left, or to conflict between the two—possibilities which Istiqlal leaders have hitherto been loath to consider.

As this book goes to press, the course of events in Egypt is still indeterminate, but it seems bound to have effects on Moroccan thinking, and could provoke a wholesome common-sense outlook instead of the airy and often unpractical assumptions so prevalent. It has revealed that a constitutional monarchy needs a constitutional monarch; that feudalism can flourish under many modern disguises; and that democracy is impossible without democrats.

I gathered that my own candid comments on Egypt, dismissed at the time as prejudiced, were now being more seriously considered!

for a few days later I noticed a significant change in their outlook.

And I noticed two other points lacking in their observation. "A drowning man clutches at a straw—accepts aid without question, no matter whence it comes." The argument is quite sound —provided that the man *is* drowning. It is hyperbole to apply the ancient catchword to Morocco.

The other point should never have been overlooked. Occasionally the Communists work to secret instructions, but more often the 'party line' is freely declared—or at least becomes quite obvious in its workings. These, in Morocco, have been clear enough for some years, but in 1952 the Communist Party in Morocco—almost entirely French, as we have seen—received instructions to proceed to more decisive action in the whole of French North Africa—that is, to make trouble where it could. In this task it was to use Istiqlal.

I repeat that this undesired interest is a great liability to the Nationalist cause. Most leaders look to the United States for sympathetic aid—but they can scarcely expect Americans to rush to the support of a party blatantly patronized by the Communists! There are signs that Russian leaders are now realizing that American success in weakening British and French 'colonialism' has done little more than to provide unique opportunities for Russia.

Even nearer home the same difficulty persists. The more the Communists and other Left-wing parties proclaim their support of Istiqlal, the more the other French parties tend to oppose it. And, for the moment, the other parties are in power.

III

It is quite certain that if Morocco achieves independence, the rift between Istiqlal and Communism will be rapid and dramatic. If the issue depended upon popular inclinations, Istiqlal would be an easy victor: but such quarrels are often settled, not by ballot but by bullet.

Nor is this the only dispute which could arise, for the Istiqlal organization includes a wide variety of people united only in their demand for independence, and ready to revert to their

other and very diverse ideas once that objective were achieved. Even the relationship with the Sultan might not be as close as is anticipated. I heard absurd stories—*not* from the local leaders —that the Sultan had sworn on the Koran to support Istiqlal. Men who knew him well were the most emphatic in their denial of the rumour. Independence is his aim, like that of Istiqlal, but he believes it important for the welfare of his people that he should preserve his power and not become a mere amiable figurehead. Though, it was argued, he may *use* Istiqlal, he will not allow it to use him. Certainly the history of the Wafd and King Farouk in Egypt ought to make interesting reading in Morocco.

Some Istiqlal leaders seem to imagine that the Sultan will fit himself into *their* scheme, when it emerges. This does not follow at all. There are many ideas about independence, and his may not agree with theirs. He may even differ in the interpretation of 'constitutional monarchy'. He has pronounced himself in favour of democracy—subject to the qualification that it was only desirable in so far as it coincided with the teaching of the Koran. This is a viewpoint which some Istiqlal leaders would scorn. Nor has anyone explained precisely how a ruler can be a religious authority and a constitutional monarch at the same time. But the Sultan is a very shrewd man, and he may prove to be closer to the reality of the situation than some of his more exuberant subjects.

The membership of Istiqlal ranges from hot-heads who would challenge the French supremacy to moderates who prefer a reasonable and well-timed development. The first includes some real fanatics: Persia is not the only country to breed Mossadeqs.

I found a more extreme approach in Casablanca than in other towns. After listening to a lengthy diatribe against the French, I pressed for some constructive proposals.

"First, independence. That is essential," I was told. "We aim at a constitutional monarchy, following the British pattern, with the Sultan and a Moroccan parliament."

"And the French?"

"We should welcome collaboration with them. For the moment, we need foreign assistance—the French have completely failed to train administrators or technicians. And we

should be happy to use their help. After independence, we should engage such French assistance as we needed."

"As Frenchmen?"

"They would be welcome to take Moroccan nationality, especially those of long residence here. They would be equal in status to us—but no more. But first we must have our rights. Morocco is not a French colony. They came here as 'protectors', but they have not fulfilled their obligations. We Moroccans are an old people, not a backward tribe. Freedom is our right—we demand it now. After independence is granted we are prepared to discuss practical measures of collaboration."

When I suggested that measures of collaboration might be necessary or even advisable *before* independence, I was indignantly checked. I found, however, a somewhat more practical atmosphere at Rabat. Talk about French 'police dictatorship' would have been rather absurd there as I met local leaders in the offices of the two Istiqlal newspapers[1]—which would scarcely have been allowed by a dictator!

While Istiqlal admits that the French trade unions are Communist-dominated, it claims that its own members are in the majority in most local branches, and could assume the leadership when they wished. It points out that in many political matters the Communists have completely failed to have their way—as in the 'peace campaign', for example, which in Morocco was a fiasco.

Istiqlal nevertheless continues to demand complete trade union freedom. It believes that it could 'capture' the unions,

[1] *El Alam* is published daily in Arabic, and has a circulation of 15,000. *Istiqlal* is a weekly, published in French, and averaging a sale of 9,500. In some ways it is as influential as the Arabic paper—Moroccans who speak the language do not necessarily understand *literary* Arabic, which is as different from the spoken tongue as is Latin from French. Local newspapers are trying to work out a language intermediate between the two forms.

The censorship imposed during the war has been abolished, but papers are seized if they include matter considered likely to arouse unrest or violence —naturally, this can be variously interpreted! At the time of my call, *El Alam* had just resumed publication after a fortnight's suspension for 'inciting to riot'.

A licence is necessary to start a new paper in Arabic, but it is to be obtained, not from the French, but from the Grand Vizier. The regulation is an old one, the idea being to safeguard Sherifian orthodoxy by ensuring that no one should read ideas unacceptable to the religious leaders. Anyone, without licence or permission, can publish a newspaper in French.

as did the Nationalists in Tunisia, and use them as a propagandist force. If it could establish unions in rural areas this would offer it opportunities for advancement in its weakest zones of influence.

In relatively backward countries economic and social problems tend to get entangled with nationalist aspirations. The ruling power can be represented both as an imperialist ruler and as an economic exploiter: both approaches have been used by Istiqlal.

I heard constant denunciation of the Berber *dahirs*, which were represented as an attack on Islam, or a deliberate attempt to divide Berbers and Arabs. If Istiqlal ever attains power, I gathered that the Koranic Law would be applied to the Berber tribes. This would certainly cause trouble, and would be a retrograde step. Istiqlal is fond of quoting the clauses of the United Nations Charter: closer examination would reveal one which prescribes respect for the customs of local populations. Men are happier under their own traditional laws than when subjected to a centralized bureaucracy.

At Rabat the demand was again for independence. "We have been putting moderate ideas to the French for years. They have been ignored, and our leaders arrested or exiled. Can you wonder that we are giving up hope? No, we have no thoughts of violence —we are appealing to the conscience of the world.

"Even at this late hour, if France could convince us of her change of heart, we would be ready to consider a more limited approach." (I had just been outlining the grant of independence to the Sudan, in well-defined stages.) "We are prepared to negotiate a date for independence with the French, so long as it were not too far distant, and in the meantime we assume responsibility stage by stage. But if the French are in earnest, they must move very quickly."

Almost always, when I pressed for details, they stopped at independence and a constitutional monarchy. When ideas were forthcoming, they differed violently. It was my task to gain information rather than to give it, or I would have lectured the Nationalists on the many parallel cases in re-born countries which I had visited. I would perhaps have begun with Poland. When it regained its independence in 1918, the overwhelming demand of the people was for democracy. In the first parliament representatives of twenty-seven different parties were

elected. A country which needed action got nothing but words —and the result was Pilsudski. And Poland was one of the luckier countries.

There are too many signs that something similar could happen in Morocco. I saw no evidence of a Pilsudski among the Nationalist leaders, but I have already suggested that they are likely to be brushed aside at the moment of action—though some of their hastily expressed ideas might be adopted by others.

At one point in my journey I met a party of serious and competent Scandinavian journalists who were touring Morocco. They told me that at Fez they interviewed a party of Istiqlal leaders, who began with the usual criticisms of the French, including complaints of their 'inhuman treatment' and 'Gestapo methods' towards the Nationalists. As French officials had suggested and arranged the interview, and were present when the Gestapo complaint was made, this sally only aroused smiles of surprise at the ignorance of what Gestapo methods could be. When the Moroccans then proceeded to outline their further ideas, they were anathema to the democratic Scandinavians.

As these left, one of them raised his hand and called "Heil, Hitler!" He told me that he did it spontaneously as a sarcastic joke, but that later he thought uneasily that it was too near to possibility to be comfortable.

IV

Although it was clear that, if ever they were successful, Istiqlal factions would quarrel among themselves, on one point all were agreed. When I asked about their strength, they all assured me that, save for the dupes of the French, all Moroccans were with them. I have suggested that this is untrue: the bulk of the people are indifferent. Further, though Istiqlal is the most vociferous political group, there *are* rival parties.

In Fez I attended a meeting of the local committee of the *Parti du Peuple Marocain*. Its title is perhaps unfortunate, having a Communist tinge, but this is far from its basic ideas: these are moderate and liberal.

Its objective is Moroccan independence, but it recognizes that

this is not at the moment practicable. It argues, therefore, in favour of growing responsibility by stages—in effect a twenty-year plan, which would ensure a transfer of power to the Moroccans with the minimum of political and economic disturbance. What is more, its programme does not consist of wordy generalizations—it includes plenty of practical suggestions.

I summarized some of the more important. In the initial stages emphasis would be given to (*a*) Education: an immediate expansion of schools and training of teachers, with a view to compulsory free education at a comparatively early date. Facilities for technical and university education to be greatly increased. (*b*) Administration: beginning immediately, and expanding rapidly, Moroccans should share increasingly in administrative tasks. (*c*) Municipal and rural councils, with the customary local powers, should be elected. (*d*) A parliament should be formed, in the first instance from delegates from the municipal and rural councils. Its work should at first be consultative, but as soon as practicable it should be given legislative functions. Later it should be elected by direct franchise.

The next stage would be one of internal autonomy, with France still in charge of foreign affairs and defence. The third and final stage envisages complete independence, linked with France by a fraternal treaty.

There is little novel in this programme—much of it was previously expounded by the Moroccan Democratic Party, which has now joined forces with Istiqlal.

The leaders of the People's Party were young, but much more clear-headed than the other Moroccan politicians whom I met. They appreciated that Morocco was a strategic region, and that its future could be affected by world tensions: that there was an internal danger of revolts and struggles for power, and that friendly collaboration with the French was not merely advisable, but imperative—herein lay one of their differences of approach with Istiqlal.

I asked about specific issues. The Sultan as a constitutional monarch, of course—but he must pay due regard to all shades of public opinion, not one party: 'the Jews are Moroccans, and will continue as Moroccans, with all rights, including that of becoming members of parliament': the French *colons* 'have

been a good example in agriculture, and should stay'—they could choose which nationality they would prefer to conserve: women should 'enter on equal rights as rapidly as can be arranged', beginning immediately with equal educational rights.

Further, they appreciated one point which some of the Istiqlal leaders overlooked or ignored.

"You realize, of course, that the Communists will try to infiltrate into your organization?" I suggested.

"Don't worry—they have already tried!"

The new party has already 32,000 members—a very good beginning in a politically immature country like Morocco.

"Not all our adherents dare proclaim themselves openly," I was informed. "If they are in business, Istiqlal opposition could ruin them. And the power of the Sultan is very great—if one of our members has a relative concerned with a mosque, or with the *habous* organization, or the *cadi's* courts, or the Koranic schools, the Sultan could be very repressive."

Not for the first time I got from Moroccans the impression that the Sultan prefers Istiqlal, with its very Right-wing tendencies, to a party with liberal ideas of reform.

"Not only the Sultan: so many people are still afraid that the French will give in to extremist demands." This was a fear I encountered more than once, much affecting the politically afraid or indifferent.

The difficulties of a new party are always tremendous. It is tempted to make a spectacular bid for support—but there remains the danger that its opponents will outbid it. This is a serious danger among a people like the Moroccans, containing such generous proportions of band-waggoners and drum-beaters. They are still a credulous people—my account of the Coca-Cola episode is not unique. The People's Party has so far expressed itself in moderate terms, so that its appeal to the mass was limited.

"By your present method of individual recruitment your progress must be slow," I suggested.

"It is!" they agreed. "So far we haven't anything like the financial resources of Istiqlal."

"And you need a leader with a well-known name."

"We have him." In confidence they told me the man's name. He did not wish to enter upon the leadership openly until the

party had gathered more power: otherwise he might suffer for his temerity.

This underlying suggestion of fear was encountered so frequently as to be disturbing. More than once it has decided the destiny of a nation, nearly always towards disaster. It is inherent among the Moroccan people, with their long traditions of incompetent and corrupt rule. In England we jeer at politicians, but we know that not all are place-seekers or ideologistic pawns: most of them are sincere, anxious to benefit their fellows, with no thought of gain to themselves. At present, this attitude would scarcely be understood by the average Moroccan. Before any political or material revolution is effected, a moral revolution is needed.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

CONFLICT OF IDEAS

I

I HAVE spoken critically of the poverty of the Nationalist propaganda: and have, I hope, quoted enough examples to prove my point. But this does not mean that the Nationalists have no case.

Here we approach a very important aspect of the issue. The argument is *not* about Moroccan independence—this has been promised so often by responsible Frenchmen of all parties that none could possibly deny it: after the second World War the French government repeated in its own Constitution and in the United Nations Charter a solemn pledge to lead the people of Morocco along the road to self-government: the real issue is *how* and *when.*

Here some of the contestants—French as well as Moroccan—part company both with one another and with reason. Some Frenchmen want to change nothing in Morocco, others would change everything.

I found few of the Istiqlal leaders very realistic on this issue. Claiming that they had lost faith in the French, they proposed to appeal to the world's conscience. They have apparently more confidence in this harassed spirit than have most Western statesmen.

I was often upbraided, as an Englishman, because Britain had not brought pressure to bear on France. I could only reply that we ourselves did not react favourably to foreign pressure, so we should scarcely propose to apply it to others. Further, in the present state of world tension, neither Britain nor America was likely to do anything which might weaken France. This argument was singularly unsuccessful.

"But we have nothing to do with world tensions," they insisted. "We are not concerned with Russia or America."

"No corner of the world is independent today."

"But Morocco is—or should be! We want nothing to do with outside quarrels."

"Maybe not." I reverted to elementary considerations. "But I have just had a telephone call from Rabat. I cannot fly home on the day for which I had booked—the aircraft has been cancelled because there is an oil strike in America. You might claim that an American industrial dispute has nothing to do with Morocco—but its effects have."

If the conscience of the world fails to come into operation, what then? An armed rising against France is out of the question. I should emphasize that it was also out of the minds of the Istiqlal leaders—they did not favour even local disturbances on the Tunisian model.

I doubt if Istiqlal could engineer any successful form of passive resistance or general strike—though they may try. The peasants would never join in the former or the workers in the latter, lest both should starve. Neither course could have the slightest hope of being effective unless it were virtually universal, and the present opposition and indifference suggest that this is impossible. Further, sections of the demonstrators would inevitably get out of hand, and the subsequent violence would give the French an excuse for stern repression.

I have mentioned the Istiqlal faith in the Arab countries and especially in Egypt. Even assuming that Middle Eastern conscience is more active than that of the rest of the world, is it within reasonable anticipation that the Arab states could bring adequate pressure to bear on France?

One impression I gained definitely in conversations with French officials of high rank. They all agreed that the French promise of Moroccan independence still stood, but behind all their diplomatic phrases they made it clear that it was not likely to mature today or tomorrow. There was no suggestion whatsoever of a policy of 'scuttle'. They intend to hand over Morocco gradually and as a going concern. They will alike ignore the most vehement demands of Istiqlal for immediate independence, and be quite impervious to the ravings of the Egyptian press. Nor did I find them at all worried about appeals to the world's conscience—which already bears so many sins that a few minor misdemeanours in North Africa scarcely count.

There is, in fact, only one possible chance of an immediate French evacuation of Morocco. This would be a third World War and a defeat of the Western powers by Russia. In that case, it is true, France could be ordered by the victors to withdraw from Morocco. But the successors to authority there would *not* be the Sultan—or Istiqlal.

II

Another aspect was persistently overlooked. Again and again I asked for possible alternatives to the foregoing suggestions whereby Morocco could achieve immediate independence, but got none. But suppose a miracle happened. Suppose a French political party achieved power and actually remembered one of its promises.

"We promised independence to the Moroccans. We will keep our word. French troops will be withdrawn immediately—the hand-over of authority will take place next month."

This, I agree, reads like the most fantastic fiction—though I met people who really believed that something like it would happen. Suppose the French did withdraw, and there were no threat of Russian or other intervention.

The answer is fairly easy: civil war. Istiqlal sneer at the Glaoui—"He will die!" So he will, but at the moment he is alive, and is by no means alone or even without potential successors. I should estimate that his most modest move would be a declaration of independence for Southern Morocco. It could be a campaign of greater magnitude. (This is not to argue whether the Glaoui ought to possess feudal powers: the practical issue is that he does.) In a sudden withdrawal of French authority, it is only too easy to foresee a complete breakdown of society, with a revival of the ancient feuds. I have suggested that the Arab-Berber issue has been greatly exaggerated, but it does exist. The cleavage between town and country is still wide, and, despite its protests, Istiqlal is generally identified with the towns. Much of the opposition's power lies in the country, which is far more difficult to control. In a civil war in present circumstances, the chances would be against Istiqlal. Further, even if the miracle should happen and France

should make a voluntary withdrawal, civil war would be an open invitation to intervention by other interested parties: if not by Russia, then by Spain.

My Istiqlal friends were self-proclaimed men of peace, and described my prognostications as abhorrent. So they are: the facts of modern situations are usually unpleasant.

My friends also declared civil war to be impossible, a foolish assertion at any time. I fear that they tended to exaggerate their own power and influence, and to under-estimate those of their opponents. This is a common failing—shared by their opponents.

However, the nightmare of civil war need not trouble either, since the French have obviously no intention of making an early evacuation. Since armed revolt is almost impossible and very unlikely to succeed, and since it is even less likely that the world's conscience will be effectively troubled, we return to the original question: what next? I can see but one practical answer: co-operation with the French towards the same objective.

This would involve a complete change of heart and mind. I have shown that the Istiqlal propaganda consists largely—sometimes entirely—of vilification of the French. Yet the most extreme partisans admitted that Morocco could scarcely survive without them. Exaggerated criticism or even abuse would be followed by the implication that, after independence was achieved, the French should continue as servants to the newly established Moroccan government. I suggest that it is unrealistic, to say the least, to picture the French as driven from Morocco by a campaign of abuse, and as then consenting to serve the men who had directed the campaign. The first is as unrealistic as the second—to imagine that the French can be driven out or persuaded to retire by abuse. Pressure always provokes counter-pressure. Co-operation could be far more effective than opposition.

III

Yet it needs two to co-operate. Istiqlal asserts bitterly that in the past the French have failed in this, and the assertion

is not groundless. Most of the French officials I met were intensely interested in their task and genuinely anxious for the progress of Morocco. The civil and military officers employed in the practical tasks of local government were as good as any of their type in the world, full of enthusiasm for work which brought such rewards of human happiness and welfare. Moreover the bulk of the French 'Ministers' at Rabat had served long apprenticeships in the field before being promoted to offices, and none had lost all their younger ardour. They have been brought up on co-operation: without it, they could never have fulfilled their missions. But, of course, the basic policy for Morocco is decided, not in Rabat, but in Paris.

Too many of the French parties have tended to look upon Morocco solely from the French angle. Because of this, the rate of progress has been adjusted by the situation in France, not by that in Morocco. I have reported that there was no sense of crisis, but there was a sense of strain beneath the surface. The greater the material and intellectual development, the more rapid must be the subsequent progress. An ignorant man can be left alone, but the moment education gives him access to wider ideas, a new phase opens. I have commented favourably on much of the French administration of Morocco. From the material aspect France could display her record to the whole world with legitimate pride. In the world of ideas I was less encouraged by my impressions in Paris than by those in Morocco. It is not merely that the last war seriously held up material reforms: it greatly increased the growth of ideas—including nationalism. France is not the only country where this important feature is sometimes overlooked.

I venture to put forward a few ideas for consideration. I do not add the conventional phrase that I offer the suggestions 'in all humility'. I am not very humble: further, I have seen exactly or closely equivalent problems in many other countries.

I suggest, first, that French politicians of all parties should recall that Morocco is not a colony, but a protectorate. Admittedly in 1912 there was little difference between these in ideas or intentions, but today the legal and implied gaps are well marked.

Second, the lingering ideas of 'divide and rule' should be abandoned forthwith. It might be possible to set Berber

against Arab: it certainly would be possible to set countryman against townsman; but either course would be wrong. Even the world's conscience might be shocked by the spectacle of internecine strife in Morocco deliberately provoked to maintain French authority. (I repeat that I found no suggestion of this policy in Rabat.)

Some *immediate* reforms are possible—some already overdue. More Moroccans should at once be taken into the administration: the special college at Rabat should be expanded, and in the meantime suitable recruits should be enlisted elsewhere. In their inexperience they would make mistakes—in which they would find themselves in a numerous company.

The French civil service is too expensive for Morocco: it was bound to be. In the British Empire we discovered that it is quite impossible for a colonial territory to support a European administration. When a white man accepts an African post, he must be reasonably compensated for his exile: yet these terms cannot be reasonable by native standards, and the system leads to differential salary scales, a great provoker of discontent. The French have now begun to pay Moroccan civil servants at French rates, but without the leave and housing allowances customary for Europeans. The replacement of Frenchmen in the clerical and administrative grades would be an economy as well as a moral advance. The technical grades would take longer to replace.

The reform of justice is urgently necessary. There *is* corruption in the present system; though it is not as widespread as popular report discredits it, there is enough to provoke a widespread lack of confidence in the administration of justice. The executive and judicial functions of pashas and caids should be separated forthwith. This proposal is now resisted by the Sultan, who might thereby lose some of his power. He will lose much more if he becomes the constitutional monarch envisaged by Istiqlal. He has proclaimed, not without reason, that he considers progress in Morocco has been too slow. This and other remarks have been interpreted as meaning that he wants independence first, with other reforms to follow: the French plan is to place reforms first, independence second—and the French have the last word. Resistance can only delay both reforms and independence.

A professional corps of judges is an urgent necessity. The nucleus exists, and should be rapidly augmented. For local petty crime, involving little more than a decision as to guilt, local magistrates are adequate, but for more serious issues and disputes trained lawyers are essential.

The word 'reform' is sometimes misused. It implies correction of a mistaken policy. In Moroccan education the problem is not one of reform, but of rapid expansion. This is a joint responsibility: the French can build new schools, but the bulk of the teachers must be Moroccan. The ideal of universal compulsory education will not be achieved without opposition—from parents who want to put their children to work, and from advocates of the long out-dated Koranic schools.

I would suggest an immediate move towards universal suffrage, at first in local affairs. In the Berber tribes, the *djemaa* are now elected—a very useful basis on which to build. In the cities the election of municipal councils should not be difficult to organize. Practical suggestions have already been made by the French, but these also have been resisted by the Sultan in his guise of guardian of Moroccan interests. The French may be trying to 'weight' their own votes too heavily—but the Sultan does not wish the French to have any votes, on the grounds that they are foreigners. This may be technically correct, but is scarcely realistic. It is one thing to persuade the French to retire, quite another to expect them to commit suicide.

Again, a largely illiterate, ill-informed electorate would make many mistakes. But democracy cannot be imposed. It can only be learned the hard way. It is the most difficult, but the most satisfying of all systems of government. The only way to appreciate responsibility and authority is to exercise them.

At present the Moroccan advisory council has more limitations than powers. It is elected from Chambers of Commerce and Agriculture—about 150,000 voters in all. As early as possible the council should be elected by direct suffrage. Then its powers should be gradually enlarged—the French Resident-General could at first enjoy a power of veto, to be used as sparingly as possible. In the council there would certainly be extravagances and absurdities, but wheat and chaff would soon be sifted. There are ways of exposing the demagogue to his own

people: often the best exposure is to adopt some of his ideas, if any.

All these are internal reforms, quite practical—some already envisaged. The next is more difficult. I regard it as important that the economy of Morocco should be separated from that of France as soon as can be. Of course, the two countries would still be very close in mutual trade, but it is admittedly absurd that Moroccan railway fares should increase merely because the French do—especially as Moroccan wages are lower. The high cost of living in Morocco is to no small extent due to the inelastic economic bond. My own impression was that economic discontent could eventually prove more difficult to the French than political agitation.

The Moroccans might also consider this point. Political freedom without economic freedom is almost meaningless. It is often better for them to come in the reverse order. Yet liberty implies responsibilities as well as rights—an unpleasant fact not always realized by immature politicians. At present the adverse trade balance is met by French generosity. If Morocco were economically independent, this could no longer be anticipated. Every move towards independence means higher expenditure and taxation. Any attempt to avoid this issue reduces politics to the soap-box level. Again, only the practical application and realization of the principle can drive it home.

There are many economic reforms which could be rapidly applied—I have referred to the huge estates of French corporations, for example. There was a time, in Morocco as in India, when it may have been effective for the European to ape *grand seigneur* standards, but that day has passed. If the French could devise means of effectively raising the standard of life, it would be a good reply to Nationalist propaganda. Not that the break-up of great estates would do much in itself, but it is a gesture always appreciated in peasant countries. The great Moroccan landowners should naturally share in any sacrifices.

Ironically, the economic difficulty is heightened by French medical successes which have greatly increased the population. It is not enough to plan for the welfare of nine million people: by the time such plans were effective another million would be added. At all stages Moroccans should be introduced into the

workings of the national economy: there is nothing so instructive as responsibility based on knowledge of the facts.

The problem of the *colons* is the most difficult of all. They claim, with reason, that they have done a great deal for their adopted country. Their outlook is very conservative, and they have friends in Paris: few have appreciated the growing impact of new ideas. The attitude of some would command agreement in South Africa. There is no perfect answer to the problem—or, if there is, I never heard it. As a first step, however, the French could stop any further agricultural settlement by Europeans in Morocco. This would help to demonstrate that France had abandoned the idea of a colony and had returned to the protectorate.

It will be observed that some, but not all, of my suggestions are not far removed from those of the Moroccan People's Party: others have already been advocated by Istiqlal. I would recommend a possible extension of political activity. At present the repressive measures, moderate though they are, have had one unfortunate effect—they have tended to drive all Moroccans towards a single party. I have suggested that Istiqlal will probably experience many internecine schisms: this is just as well, for one single party points inevitably towards dictatorship. The People's Party could attract the more moderate element away from Istiqlal: hence, perhaps, the annoyance in the latter's ranks that anyone should consider another party is necessary. In the advisory council a constant French-Moroccan division would be harmful, but if both nationalities were divided politically a wide range of democratic discussion would be possible. There would doubtless be many disappointments, setbacks and extravagances, but experience over the years would work out a practical approach towards that ultimate independence which, achieved precipitately and prematurely, could only lead to chaos, retrogression, and worse.

It may be that the Istiqlal leaders, committed to a demand for immediate independence, would refuse to collaborate in a more gradual and orderly process. But millions of ordinary Moroccans would.

IV

A French philosopher once proclaimed: "The social revolution must be a moral revolution or it will never take place at all." This is a fundamental truth.

Morocco is already in a state of material revolution. In forty years it has advanced through normal centuries of progress. Yet the moral revolution has not even begun. 'Back to the Koran' is an equivocation, to excuse autocracy and retrogression.

The French can suggest ideas for moral revolution from their own history, but the responsibility is primarily Moroccan. No French failings can excuse its lack.

Before moral advance can become possible, a complete re-examination of the whole basis of the Nationalist case is essential. I have recorded my own impression that this has hitherto been founded on alleged French shortcomings rather than on the ideological urge of the human spirit for freedom. To date this has scarcely been encouraged, and is not immediately obvious.

When the basis has been re-established, an additional implication has to be faced. As Nurse Cavell is reported to have said when condemned to death, "Patriotism is not enough." It is unfortunate for the Moroccans that nationalism is rising among them at a time when it is becoming out-dated elsewhere. The French Empire has become the French Union: a federated Western Europe is no longer a mere dream but a practical possibility. There can be little place for narrow nationalism in a modern world in which human happiness can survive. The world is now too small.

One final thought remains for the Istiqlal. The biggest difficulty is not to attain liberty, but to exercise it. If the time and energy devoted to abuse were applied to constructive thought, the moral revolution might be nearer than it is now.

This is the shortest section of my book, but not the least important.

V

Yet the ultimate objective is the independence of Morocco. In Marrakesh I listened with Dimancescu to the arguments of local Istiqlal. Dimancescu has spent a lifetime in the political and diplomatic world, and his opinion is valuable. When we were alone, we found that we had been thinking around the same aspect. "The French have ten years!"

Most of the Istiqlal leaders are comparatively young. It is not merely that they do not remember conditions before the protectorate: they are building up a picture of a Morocco which never existed. It is true that for centuries Morocco had been an independent state, and at one time enjoyed a high civilization. But in the last century degeneration was rapid. Authority was corrupt, incompetent and feudal: the Sultan's rule extended only as far as the force of his armies—by 1911 it was virtually restricted to the city of Fez. Power was absolute, the poor man at the mercy of the rich: appalling poverty was the common lot. Health conditions were shocking, and epidemics periodically decimated the population.

Men were imprisoned at the whim of sultans or pashas: the most horrible tortures were applied—there are contemporary accounts not back in the Middle Ages but in our own time. The slave trade flourished. Education, so far as it existed, consisted of a dogmatic teaching of Koranic texts—and was confined to boys. The position of women was indeed lowly. For generations European ideas had been excluded, and the governing clique deliberately kept the mass of the people in ignorance.

No one would pretend that Moroccan conditions are perfect today, but at least they are very much better than this! Above all there is peace, and a man can hope.

Peace is perhaps the greatest boon of the French occupation. For long Morocco was torn by internecine strife, feudal lords against the Sultan or each other, tribe against tribe. But for this there could have been no European intervention—of which the protectorate was not the beginning but the culmination.

Today there are many men still alive who can recall the terror and anarchy of the early years of this century. You will not

find these men in the Nationalist ranks. These are a valuable corrective to the exuberances of patriotism. But they are growing old. In ten years few will remain, and their voices will be feeble. It is within this period that the French have to establish the new Morocco.

VI

Haste has been impelled by world events—for the suggestion of an isolationist Morocco is of course absurd. The war, destroying ancient traditions, stimulated new ideas or local variations on old ones. India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon were freely granted their independence: France withdrew, if grudgingly, from Syria. Yet a new urgency was given to Moroccan affairs by the course of events in Libya.

Here was an Italian colony, not a protectorate. It was ruled in the Italian interest: tens of thousands of colonists were settled there, and the natives—Arab-Berbers like the Moroccans—were held ruthlessly down. Local progress could not in any way compare with that in Morocco.

Then during the war the British liberated the country. After a period of Allied military occupation, a decision as to the future of Libya had to be made. There were plenty of claimants—at one time Russia was included! Britain was especially interested in Cyrenaica, France in the Fezzan. In default of agreement, a direct United Nations trusteeship was suggested, but Russia objected. After many other abortive suggestions, U.S.A. even came to favour the restoration of Italian rule! Russia thereupon brought forward a 'new' scheme—a direct United Nations trusteeship. But now the other powers objected.

Thus, since the ex-Allies could not agree, they decided in sheer weariness on another plan—Libya should become an independent state. The Cyrenaican emir became the new king, delighting his own people but glumly received by the Tripolitanians. The country is mostly desert, its people miserably poor, without political experience, never having known a centralized native rule, and divided among themselves. Yet they achieved their independence. "If the Libyans, why not us?" cried the peoples of French North Africa—and their question was reasonable enough.

Tunisia, next-door neighbour of Libya, was first affected. Its status was approximately that of Morocco—it had been a French protectorate since 1878: its Bey retained some titular powers—but in Tunisia the Beys had nominally been Turkish governors, not monarchs like the Moroccan sultans. The French organization was also similar, with pashas and caids with French 'assistants'.

There was a complication because of Italian claims to Tunis, serious before 1939, but losing their force with the Italian defeat. A Tunisian Nationalist movement began in 1920: the Destour party was the usual group of middle-class liberals and intellectuals, with moderate aims. Then, also as usual, a splinter group broke off—Neo-Destour—urging more definite action. The date was significant—1934, the year of the foundation of Istiqlal.

Both parties were disappointed by the failure of the French Popular Front government to redeem its promises, and there were serious riots in Tunisia—significantly, in the towns, not the villages. Both Destour (Constitution) parties were dissolved by the French—which simply meant that they were driven underground, where they were probably more effective. In 1939 I was taken by night under conspiratorial conditions to an isolated mountain village. There I met the Destourian leaders, still carrying on their activities.

Then came the war. Some Tunisians sided with the Germans —the French deposed the Bey on this charge. The present position is extraordinarily confused. There is the almost universal cleavage between town and country, and between pastoral and agricultural tribes. The Nationalists, despite their strength, include a discordant variety of people: they are backed by the Communists and by dissident Italian factions.

With such a medley of claims, and in a land where restraint is not common, behaviour has not been as moderate as in Morocco—which did not witness severe fighting and enemy occupation. The independence of Libya broke through the very mild restraint which may have existed in Tunisia. French suggestions of reforms were countered by still higher demands. The spring of 1952 saw a melancholy succession of riots and arrests. The net result was probably to strengthen the Nationalist cause. Asian and Arab states attempted to raise

the Tunisian question before the Security Council of the United Nations, but went unheard. Yet quite obviously the crisis has only been postponed. The Neo-Destour leaders have announced, in effect, active preparation for 'the decisive battle—the armed struggle'. In such matters words come easier than deeds, but a programme of internal and violent disruption is possible. The French, already burdened with grievous problems, may be tempted to offer concessions. If they do, the same terms should simultaneously be available in Morocco. I found Moroccans keenly watching the Tunisian situation. Though the Tunisians are of common stock, the Moroccans tend to despise them. ("The Tunisian is a woman, the Algerian a man, the Moroccan a lion," runs a local saying.) Certainly the Moroccan, if less advanced politically, is generally more intelligent and a better worker. If he were not given at least equivalent treatment, the resentment would not be confined to Istiqlal.

Nationalism in Tunisia, however, differs considerably from the Moroccan pattern. It is an organized force, commanding support in all classes, even if townsmen predominate: especially it is supported by the local trade unions—which in Tunisia are much more advanced than in other parts of North Africa. This gives a basis of discipline to the Neo-Destour party which is lacking elsewhere. Further, as nearly all the Tunisian unions are affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and *not* to the Communist-dominated Confederation Générale du Travail, they have a world audience for their pleas for support.

In another respect, too, Tunisia is further advanced. Due to its much longer experience under French control and the greater advantage it has taken of educational opportunities, it has more professional men and technicians available for service. Indeed, it is a source of somewhat bitter pride that the newly independent Libya has had to borrow doctors and other specialists from Tunisia! The Moroccan weakness in this respect is a serious hindrance to practical aspiration.

The background of the Algerian problem is quite different. Here is no protectorate: the French took the land from the Turks in 1830, and at first governed it as a colony. Then they assumed a more imaginative policy. Algeria became part of France. While retaining control of local affairs, it sends

members to the French parliament. Many classes of Algerians became eligible for French citizenship, with all its privileges. In local affairs the administration is more advanced than in Morocco, and the Algerians elect representatives to local councils.

Nevertheless, there is widespread discontent. There are nearly a million French settlers, and in the early days of colonization unfair methods of acquiring native land were used. Today, since the French farmers are usually more enterprising than the Algerians, their crops are better—and this arouses envy and jealousy. Further, those not eligible for French citizenship often oppose those who are. Add the French difficulties during the war, and economic problems after the war, and it will be seen that possibilities of trouble are never far distant.

The peasants, as usual, are not intensely interested in political disputes, and the Nationalist movement began among conservative 'intellectuals' of the towns. To attain French citizenship they had to renounce their 'personal status', and to accept the Code Napoleon instead of the Koranic Law. To a devout Moslem this was an invitation to abandon his religious principles. Today the qualifications for assimilation are more liberal, and do not involve loss of 'personal status'.

There was a most unfortunate incident on V-Day in 1945. A victory procession formed in a little town, and one man carried a Nationalist banner: a policeman tried to wrest it from him. The struggle became a riot, which spread to neighbouring towns. One hundred and two Europeans and 1,500 Algerians were killed.

Nationalists seized the opportunity of the moment of resentment. One leader made a clever move: agreeing that Algeria was part of France, he proposed that all Algerians should become French citizens with full civic rights. Proportionate to its numbers, Algeria would have 100 members in a French Chamber of 600. The French were alarmed: it seemed that they were to be absorbed by their own empire. The idea was rejected. The next was more radical. Another Algerian leader, Ferhat Abbas, declared that the policy of assimilation with France was now bankrupt, and called for an independent Algerian republic! A third leader, Messali, was almost as forthright.

The French preferred to move cautiously. In September

1947 a new statute of Algeria was voted, after bitter opposition from both Right and Left extremes. It confirmed Algeria's existence as a department of France: it increased Moslem representation and widened the franchise for the local council which 'advised' the Governor-General: it separated Church from State, and even gave the vote to Moslem women: it enlarged the voter's list by giving citizenship to people of minimum educational standard. It was, in fact, a progressive move—small, but certain. But the Algerian Nationalists by this time were in no mood for compromise. They attacked the Statute bitterly from every angle.

Nevertheless, the ordinary people seemed to be impressed by the apparent good faith of the French, and in the next parliamentary elections the Nationalists enjoyed only a very limited success. The French gained a breathing space. It could be used for statesmanlike action. A plan has been announced for wider educational facilities and for agricultural development. It should be implemented at the utmost speed. The political situation is not yet out of hand in Algeria: many of its unhappy features have been stimulated by economic distress. If the French can mount a serious attack on the twin evils of ignorance and poverty, they will deserve well of the Algerians —the mass of whom can never be rich. For it should be recalled when listening to well-educated and fervid Nationalist orators, that the bulk of the Algerians are peasants, very little interested in politics, but *very* interested in the yield of crops, the prices they will fetch: or, in these hard days, in the prospect of the next meal.

Again, events in Libya and Tunisia have been keenly observed in Algeria: and events in Algeria are just as keenly observed in Morocco.

Students of Morocco will not need the advice to follow closely subsequent events in Tunisia and Algeria. The future of Morocco could so easily depend upon what happens next door.

VII

Recently we have heard a good deal of the Moroccan point of view, but little of the French, who are not as good publicists

as they used to be. The French are legitimately irritated by criticism from abroad. Some British factions echo the wildest exuberances of Istiqlal propaganda. Even responsible British politicians have on occasion made patronizing remarks about the French administration—ignoring the fact that we face exactly similar problems in some of our own colonies. No one has yet found the perfect method—if it exists!—of reconciling the interests of natives and of European settlers. This is a fundamental irritant in Morocco: the French settlers are an economic asset, but most of them have failed to observe the rapid onset of nationalist ideas: they tend to think in terms of whiffs of grape-shot instead of social reform.

Especially the French are irritated by virulent criticism on the part of the retrogressive Moslem League and some of the Arab states. If the Egyptian leaders, for example, had made a good showing in ruling their own country, the French might have been better prepared to accept advice from them.

Yet I found that the bulk of the French scorn was reserved for the Americans. "The Egyptians know no better, the Americans should. And the Egyptians are negligible, the Americans are not."

"Why are the Americans so illogical?" asked a leading Frenchman. "They argue in favour of the Jews in Palestine. The Arabs made poor use of the land, the Jews made good use. Therefore the Jews should have it. Yet, when we use precisely this argument as part of our case in Morocco, the Americans oppose it, and deride us with antiquated arguments about colonialism."

"They spend hundreds of millions of dollars on arming us, since French strength is essential to the welfare of the world—and then they weaken us politically by ill-judged and sometimes childish interventions. Look at their ill-concealed support of Tunisian claims! Do they know nothing of backward peoples—have they not learned from their own unhappy experience in the Philippines? So many of them seem to think that all you have to do is to give everybody a vote: then you have democracy, and everybody is happy. What absurdity! They have only to study Korea!"

"I took some of their journalists to task," said a very responsible man. "They came here and saw the truth: they admitted

their astonishment at the quiet atmosphere and the exaggeration of the tales which had reached them. But then they wrote sensational articles. They explained that their editors and readers *wanted* sensation—would not be interested in stories of peaceful progress. What a travesty! And yet how damaging—for it is amazing what people will believe on the basis of emotional slogans. I do not mean only in Morocco. Here the effects have been tragic. You will meet Moroccans who almost believe that the Americans are ready to march to their deliverance. You and I recognize the absurdity of the idea, but people with little knowledge of the political world take words too seriously."

I have often thought that if all the politicians of the world would shut their mouths for a year, a new atmosphere of progress might be generated.

Since many of the criticisms are irresponsible, the French resentment can be understood. Yet they must recognize that North African nationalism today has more than local significance. Just as Morocco is affected by outside events, so the progress of Morocco will affect the course of the free world.

Foreign countries should note that, although the present campaign is directed against the French, it is fundamentally more far-reaching. From time to time there are traces of a short-sighted xenophobia—not against the French, but against all foreigners. You cannot avoid the impression that to some Moroccans nationalism is merely a revival of the reaction of Islam against Christianity.

The French case has often been misrepresented, that of Istiqlal exaggerated. But there *is* a feeling for independence in Morocco: it is useless to ignore or deny what exists. The feeling will grow—either violently, as a reaction against repression, or gently, healthily, even under guidance. The French of all people in the world should understand a demand for freedom. It is not yet a passion in Morocco, for it has been countered by the effects of tradition and environment. Like most other ideas—including the Moslem religion—it came late to the Land of the Furthest West; and at first it was weak and hesitant. Yet it is a desire which will ultimately triumph over the many damaging influences, like tribal practices or feudal survivals. Ironically, the greater the French success in raising educational and social levels, the more certain and rapid its growth. If it

is allowed to degenerate into fanaticism, then it will be unrestrained by thoughts of economic disaster, and will be encouraged by coercion.

There is little or no gratitude in the modern world. The American outlook on colonialism is indeed out-dated. The French will never make a profit on Morocco, or get back the lives, labour and treasure they have invested there. Theirs is a familiar predicament of today. They have done a good job, yet can look for no reward.

VIII

Morocco is a pleasant country. Its people are intelligent and capable of playing a worthy part in the modern world. They have courage and tenacity, and their hospitality is traditional. When they themselves will it, there is no limit to the progress they can attain.

The Moroccans gave me nothing but kindness. I liked them so much that I am concerned about their future. I can appreciate their ambitions, but few of them seem to realize how hard the road to freedom can be, and how callous is the world.

A dozen times I thought of Burma, where I had seen the pangs of re-birth. The independence of Burma, like that of Morocco, was an accepted objective: by the accidents of war it was prematurely delivered, and by a series of miscalculations its first care was entrusted to a single party.

The result is known: a Burma torn into fragments by internal dissension, the authority of the government severely restricted, tribal feuds and political partisanship forcing a medley of civil wars, death and misery on countless thousands—and no guarantee or even suggestion that the end is in sight. Suppose Burma had approached the same objective by a more gradual route—as, for example, the Sudan is doing. Would another ten or twenty years of tutelage have mattered in the history of a country—years which would have obviated the confusion and misery of the present situation, and led direct to a clean start on a prepared road? I do not want to see another Burma in Morocco.

Impatience is a nationalist disease, fostered by opposition. It

leads to the airy dismissal of difficulties as of no importance. One evening I raised a stock point to an Istiqlal group—that, without the French, Morocco would be hopelessly involved for lack of technical skill and capital resources, to say nothing of administrative experience. One man made the proud reply that it did not matter—that Moroccans would rather starve than live under French domination. If this is true at all, it applies only to a tiny minority. But another gave a more popular reply: that with the French gone, the Moroccans would own all the factories, railways and other assets: that the United Nations would of course lend technicians and that other countries would be generous in the supply of raw materials. Though this displayed a degree of wishful thinking which amazes a European, none of the group appeared to dispute its logic.

The bulk of the Moroccans would certainly prefer a moderate liberal policy of advance rather than a hasty dash to disaster. Yet they are so inadequately informed that they can be easily misled.

In Paris, especially, I found an over-optimistic view of the situation. "The French have ten years," I wrote earlier, but this period could be shortened by events far from Morocco—a French withdrawal from Indo-China, for example, would certainly stimulate nationalism in North Africa.

Save for the *colons*, who stand firmly on their 'rights', I scarcely met a Frenchman who was not generously interested in Moroccan progress. The problem is the practical application of that interest.

. . . . . .

This book was written during and immediately after my visit to Morocco. As it goes to press (December 1952), the country is agitated by serious riots in Casablanca and other towns, with heavy loss of life. The disturbances underline several points I have emphasized: (*a*) 'The future of Morocco could so easily depend on what happens next door'—the occasion for the riots was the murder of a Trade union leader in *Tunisia*: (*b*) the danger of unnatural alliances—the Communists appear to have provoked the riots 'on behalf of' the Nationalists—who, I have

stated, are *not* Communists; (*c*) my Istiqlal friends—most of them arrested for complicity in the riots—should reflect that in their careless impatience they could arouse a monster which they could not control; (*d*) the urgency of the problem, for the riots are bound to acerbate tempers—Nationalist propaganda will of course blame everything on the French. In their turn, French politicians should realize that the effects of repression are limited and reversible, and should read over my final story every morning.

Some months ago I was lecturing at a South Coast town. After speaking for an hour and answering questions for another, I was thinking of my train home when the chairman called on someone to propose a vote of thanks. I groaned when the man got up—he looked as if he would speak so long as to make me miss my train. He did, but I forgave him for one of his stories. Satan called a special meeting of all the junior devils.

"We must face up to it," he said. "We're doing very badly. I want some new ideas from you."

"Here's one," said a young devil. "Let's persuade people that there's no God."

"I said *new* ideas," Satan retorted. "We've been trying that one for hundreds of years. Next!"

"What about this?" said another devil. "Let's persuade people that there's no hell."

"What's the use of that, when millions of them are already living in it? Any more?"

"Yes, Satan. Let's persuade people that there's no hurry!"

"Ah!" said Satan, rubbing his hands. "Now we're getting somewhere!"

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